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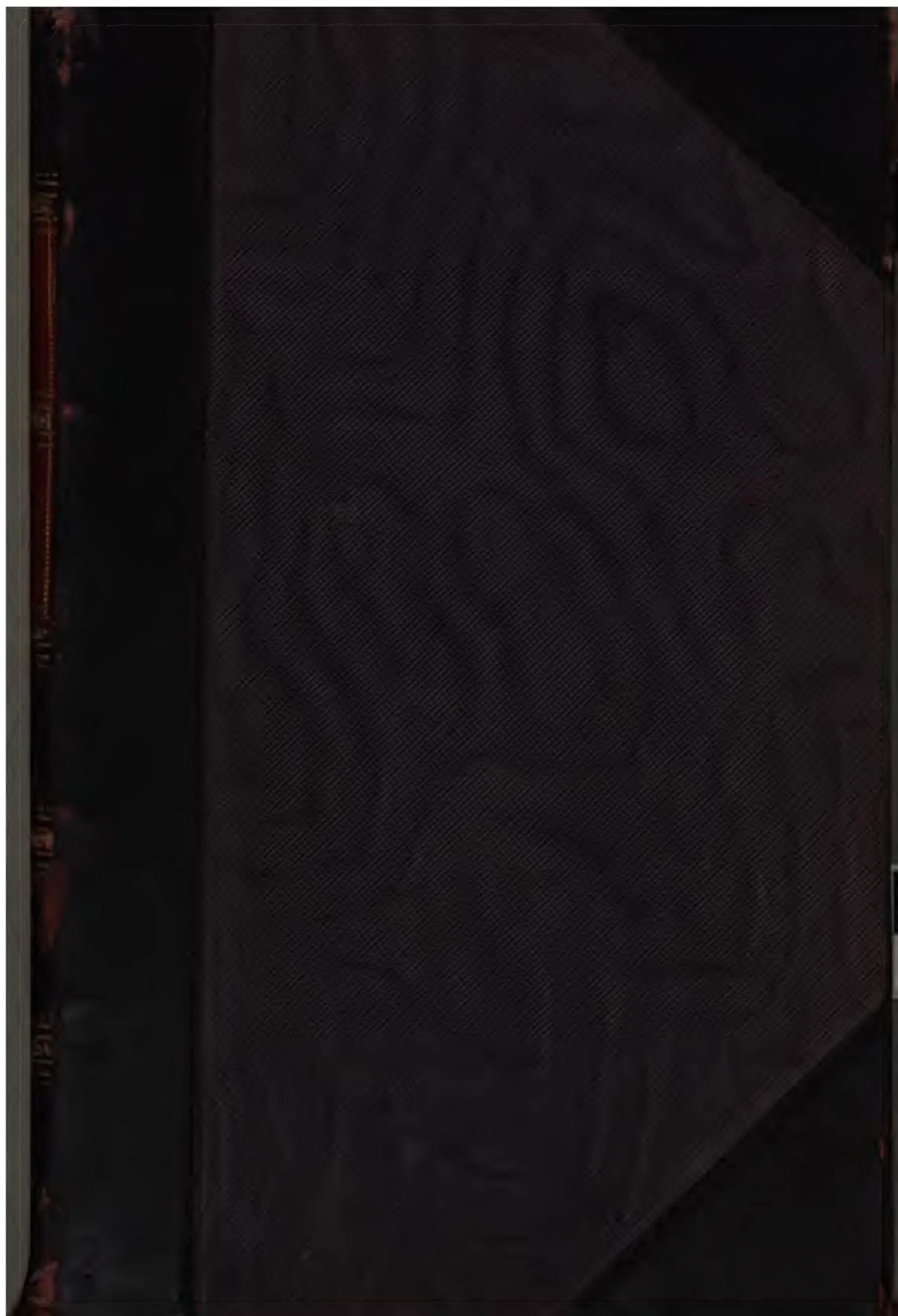
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**THE PHILOSOPHY**

**OF THE**

**HUMAN MIND.**





LECTURES  
ON THE  
PHILOSOPHY OF THE MIND.

BY THE LATE  
THOMAS BROWN, M.D.  
PROFESSOR OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH.

WITH A MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR,  
BY DAVID WELSH, D.D.  
LATE PROFESSOR OF CHURCH HISTORY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH.

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LECTURES  
ON THE  
PHILOSOPHY OF THE HUMAN MIND.

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LECTURE XXIV.

*Analysis of the Feelings usually ascribed to the Sense of Touch—  
Continued.*

GENTLEMEN, having stated, in a former Lecture, the reasons which seem to show that the origin of our notion of extension, and of the notions which it involves of figure, magnitude, divisibility, is not to be found in our sense of touch, I endeavoured, in my last Lecture, to trace these to their real source,—cautioning you, at the same time, with respect to the great difficulty of the inquiry, and the very humble reliance, therefore, which we can have any title to put on the results of our investigation of a subject so very obscure.

In our present circumstances, when we attempt such an investigation, it is impossible for us to derive even the slightest aid from remembrance of our original feelings; since memory, which afterwards can look back through so many long and busy years, and comprehend all of life but the very commencement of it, sees yet, in this dawn of being, a darkness which it cannot penetrate. We have already formed—spontaneously, and without the aid of any one—our little

system of physical science, and have, in truth, enriched ourselves with acquisitions far more important than any which we are afterwards to form, with all the mature vigour of our faculties, and all the splendid aids of traditionary philosophy,—at a time when we seem scarcely capable of more than of breathing and moving, and taking our aliment, and when the faculties that leave us so much invaluable knowledge, are to leave us no knowledge of the means by which we have acquired it.

To the period of our first sensations, therefore, we cannot look back; and hence, all which remains for us, in an inquiry of this kind, is to consider the circumstances in which the infant is placed, and to guess, as nearly as general analogy will allow us, the nature and the order of the feelings which, in such circumstances, would arise in a being possessing the powers and susceptibilities of man, but destitute of all the knowledge which man possesses.

In these first circumstances of life, the infant, of course, cannot know that he has a bodily frame, or a single organ of that frame, more than he can know that there are other bodies in nature that act upon his own; and we are not entitled to suppose—however difficult it may be for us to accommodate our supposition to the true circumstances of the case—that because we, the inquirers, know that external bodies are pressing on his organ of touch, the little sensitive being is to have any knowledge but of the mental affections which these external bodies excite. How the knowledge of anything more than his own mind is acquired is, in truth, the very difficulty which it is our labour to solve.

In conformity with this view, then, when we look on the infant, one of the most remarkable circumstances

which strike us, is its tendency to use its muscles with almost incessant exercise, particularly the muscles of those parts which are afterwards its principal organs of measurement. Its little fingers are continually closing and opening, and its little arms extending and contracting. The feelings, therefore, whatever these may be, which attend the progressive contraction of those parts—and some feeling unquestionably attends the contraction in all its stages—must be continually arising in its mind, beginning and finishing, in regular series, and varying exactly with the quantity of the contraction.

A succession of feelings, however, when remembered by the mind which looks back upon them, we found to involve, necessarily, the notion of divisibility into separate parts, and, therefore, of length, which is only another name for continued divisibility. Time, in short, is, to our conception, a series in constant onward progress, and cannot be conceived by us but as a progressive series, of which our separate feelings are parts; the remembrance of the events of our life, whenever we take any distant retrospect of them, being like the remembrance of the space which we have traversed in a journey, an indistinct continuity of length,—as truly divisible, in our conception, into the separate events which we remember, as the space which we remember to have traversed, into its separate variety of scenes.

Time, then, or remembered succession, we found to involve, not metaphorically, as is commonly said, but truly and strictly, in its very essence, the notions of length and divisibility,—the great elements of extension; and whatever other feelings may be habitually and uniformly associated with these, will involve, of course, these elementary notions.



The series of muscular feelings, of which the infant is conscious,—in incessantly closing and opening his little hand,—must, on these principles, be accompanied with the notion, not, indeed, of the existence of his hand, or of anything external, but of a certain length of succession; and each stage of the contraction, by frequent renewal, gradually becomes significant of a particular length, corresponding with the portion of the series. When any hard body, therefore, is placed in the infant's hand,—though he cannot, indeed, have any knowledge of the object, or of the hand,—he yet feels that he can no longer perform the accustomed contraction; or, to speak more accurately,—since he is unacquainted with any parts that are contracted, he feels that he can no longer produce his accustomed series of feelings; and he knows the quantity of contraction which remained to be performed, or rather the length of the series which remained to be felt. The place of this remaining length is now supplied by a new feeling, partly muscular, and partly the result of the affection of the compressed organ of touch,—and is supplied by the same feeling, at the same point of the series, as often as he attempts to renew the contraction while the body remains within his hand. The tactual feeling, therefore, whatever it may be, becomes, by this frequent repetition, associated with the notion of that particular progressive series, or length, of which it thus uniformly supplies the place; and at last becomes representative of this particular length, precisely in the same manner as, in the acquired perceptions of vision, certain shades of colour become representative of distance, to which they have of themselves no resemblance or analogy whatever; and we thus learn to feel length as we learn to see length,—not directly by the mere affections of our tactual or

visual organs, but by the associated notions which they suggest.

If time, as perceived by us in the continued series of our feelings, do involve conceptual length and divisibility, it seems, indeed, scarcely possible that, in the circumstances supposed, the notions supposed should not arise,—that the infant should be conscious of a regular series of feelings in the contraction of its fingers and arms, and yet that portions of this series should not become significant of various proportional lengths;—and, if the notion of certain proportional lengths do truly accompany certain degrees of progressive contraction, it seems equally impossible, according to the general principles of our mental constitution, that the compound tactual and muscular feeling, which must arise in every case in which any one of these degrees of contraction is impeded, should not become associated with the notion of that particular length, of which it supplies the place, so as at last to become truly representative of it.

In this manner I endeavoured to explain to you how our knowledge of the mere length of bodies may have been acquired, from varieties of length that are recognised as co-existing and proximate, and are felt to unite, as it were, and terminate in our sensation of resistance, which interrupts them equally, and interrupts always a greater number of the co-existing lengths, in proportion to the size of the body compressed; and in a similar manner, our notions of the other dimensions of bodies, which are only these varieties of length in different directions. I cannot conclude this summary, however, without recalling to your attention a very simple experiment which I requested you to make for yourselves,—an experiment that, even in the unfavourable circumstances in which it must now be

tried, is yet, I conceive, demonstrative of the influence of mere time, as an element of that complex notion which we have been examining, when the more rapid measurements of vision—which are confessedly not original, but acquired—are excluded. If, in passing our finger, with different degrees of slowness or rapidity, along the same surface, with our eyes shut,—even though we should previously know the exact boundaries of the extent of surface,—we feel it almost impossible not to believe, and, but for the contrary evidence of vision, could not have hesitated a single moment in believing, that this extent is greater or less, according as the time employed in performing exactly the same quantity of motion, with exactly the same force of pressure, on the same quantity of our organ of touch, may have been greater or less,—it must surely be admitted, that the notion of the length, which thus uniformly varies with the time, when all other circumstances are the same, is not absolutely independent of the time; or it must in like manner be believed, that our notion of visual distance, which varies with the distribution of a few rays of light on the small expanse of the optic nerve, is yet independent of those faint shades of colouring, according to the mere varieties of which it seems at one time to lay open to our view a landscape of many miles, and at another time to present to us, as it were before our very eyes, an object of scarcely an inch in diameter. The greater dimness and diminished size of a few objects in the back-ground of a picture, which is in itself one coloured plane of light, does not more truly seem to increase the line of distance of those objects, than, in the other case, the increased slowness of the motion of our hand along any surface seems to lengthen the line which separates one of its boundaries from the other.



Though the notion of extension, however, may arise in the manner which I have supposed, this, it may be said, is not the notion of external existence. To what, then, are we to ascribe the belief of external reality, which now accompanies our sensations of touch? It appears to me to depend on the feeling of resistance,—the origin of which, as a muscular feeling, I before explained to you, which, breaking in, without any known cause of difference, on an accustomed series, and combining with the notion of extension, and consequently of divisibility, previously acquired, furnishes the elements of that compound notion which we term the notion of matter. Extension, resistance: to combine these simple notions in something which is not ourselves, and to have the notion of matter, are precisely the same thing; as it is the same thing to have combined the head and neck of a man with the body and legs of a horse, and to have the notion of that fabulous being which the ancients denominated a centaur. It certainly, at least, would not be easy for any one to define matter more simply, than as that which has parts, and that which resists our effort to grasp it; and, in our analysis of the feelings of infancy, we have been able to discover how both these notions may have arisen in the mind, and arisen too in circumstances which must lead to the combination of them in one complex notion.

The infant stretches out his arm for the first time, by that volition, without a known object, which is either a mere instinct, or very near akin to one: This motion is accompanied with a certain feeling,—he repeats the volition which moves his arm fifty or one thousand times, and the same progress of feeling takes place during the muscular action. In this repeated progress he feels the truth of that intuitive



proposition which, in the whole course of the life that awaits him, is to be the source of all his expectations, and the guide of all his actions; the simple proposition, that what has been as an antecedent, will be followed by what has been as a consequent. At length he stretches out his arm again, and instead of the accustomed progression, there arises, in the resistance of some object opposed to him, a feeling of a very different kind, which, if he persevere in his voluntary effort, increases gradually to severe pain, before he has half completed the usual progress. There is a difference, therefore, which we may, without any absurdity, suppose to astonish the little reasoner: for the expectation of similar consequents, from similar antecedents, is observable even in his earliest actions, and is probably the result of an original law of mind, as universal as that which renders certain sensations of sight and sound the immediate result of certain affections of our eye or ear. To any being who is thus impressed with belief of similarities of sequence, a different consequent necessarily implies a difference of the antecedent. In the case at present supposed, however, the infant, who as yet knows nothing but himself, is conscious of no previous difference; and the feeling of resistance seems to him, therefore, something unknown, which has its cause in something that is not himself.

I am aware that the application, to an infant, of a process of reasoning expressed in terms of such grave and formal philosophic nomenclature, has some chance of appearing ridiculous. But the reasoning itself is very different from the terms employed to express it, and is truly as simple and natural as the terms which our language obliges us to employ in expressing it are abstract and artificial. The infant, however, in his belief of similarity of antecedents and consequents, and

of the necessity, therefore, of a new antecedent where the consequent is different, has the reasoning but not the terms. He does not form the proposition as universal and applicable to cases that have not yet existed; but he feels it in every particular case as it occurs. That he does truly reason, with at least as much subtlety as is involved in the process now supposed, cannot be doubted by those who attend to the manifest results of his little inductions, in those acquisitions of knowledge which show themselves in the actions, and, I may say, almost in the very looks of the little reasoner, at a period long before that to which his own remembrance is afterwards to extend, when, in the maturer progress of his intellectual powers, the darkness of eternity will meet his eye alike, whether he attempt to gaze on the past or on the future; and the wish to know the events with which he is afterwards to be occupied and interested, will not be more unavailing than the wish to retrace events that were the occupation and interest of the most important years of his existence.

Then,—

“So, when the mother, bending o’er his charms,  
Clasps her fair nursling in delighted arms:—  
With sparkling eye the blameless plunderer owns  
Her soft embraces and endearing tones,  
Seeks the salubrious fount with opening lips,  
*Spreads his inquiring hands, and smiles, and sips,*”<sup>1</sup>—

Even then, many a process of ratiocination is going on, which might have served as an example of strict logic to Aristotle himself, and which affords results far more valuable to the individual reasoner than all the contents of all the folios of the crowd of that great logician’s scholastic commentators.

<sup>1</sup> Darwin’s *Botanic Garden*, Canto III, v. 353-54, and 357-360.

That the notions of extension and external resistance—which are thus supposed to be acquired from the progressive contraction of muscles, and the difficulty opposed to their accustomed contraction, which introduces suddenly a new feeling, when all the antecedent feelings had been the same—should be directly combined only with the sensations of touch, cannot appear wonderful, when we reflect, that it is only in the case of touch there is that frequent co-existence or immediate succession which is necessary to the subsequent union. In the case of the acquired perceptions of vision, it might, in like manner, be asked, Why is it that we do not smell the exact distance of a rose, as we see its exact distance as soon as we have turned our eye on the bush on which the rose is growing? And the only answer which can be given, is, that there has not been in smell that exact and frequent co-existence of feelings which has occurred in vision. It surely is not more wonderful, therefore, that the same argument should hold in the acquired perceptions of touch, in which the co-existence is still more frequent and exact. When we listen to a flute, our muscles may be contracted as before, or quiescent as before; when the odour of a rose is wafted to us, not a single muscle may be more or less affected. But without the action of muscles we cannot grasp a ball, nor press against a resisting body, nor move our hand along its surface. Whatever feelings, therefore, are involved in muscular contraction, may be, or rather I may say, if the common laws of association operate, must be associated with the simple feelings thus constantly co-existing, whatever they may be, which the organ of touch originally affords. To suppose that, in a case of such frequent co-existence or succession, no association takes place, and that our feelings of touch are, at



this moment, as simple as they were originally, would surely be to suppose the universal influence of the associating principle to be suspended in this particular case.

I have already explained the manner in which I suppose the infant to obtain the notion of something external and separate from himself, by the interruption of the usual train of antecedents and consequents, when the painful feeling of resistance has arisen, without any change of circumstances of which the mind is conscious in itself; and the process by which he acquires this notion is only another form of the very process which, during the whole course of his life, is involved in all his reasonings, and regulates, therefore, all his conclusions with respect to every physical truth. In the view which I take of the subject, accordingly, I do not conceive that it is by any peculiar intuition we are led to believe in the existence of things without. I consider this belief as the effect of that more general intuition by which we consider a new consequent, in any series of accustomed events, as the sign of a new antecedent, and of that equally general principle of association, by which feelings that have frequently co-existed, flow together, and constitute afterwards one complex whole. There is something which is not ourself—something which is representative of length—something which excites the feeling of resistance to our effort; and these elements combined are matter. But whether the notion arise in the manner I have supposed, or differently, there can be no doubt that it has arisen long before the period to which our memory reaches; and the belief of an external world, therefore, whether founded directly on an intuitive principle of belief, or, as I rather think, on associations as powerful as intuition in the period which alone we know, may be said to be an essential part of our mental con-

stitution, at least as far back as that constitution can be made the subject of philosophic inquiry. Whatever it may have been originally, it is now as impossible for us to disbelieve the reality of some external cause of our sensations, as it is impossible for us to disbelieve the existence of the sensations themselves. On this subject scepticism may be ingenious in vain; and equally vain, I may say, would be the attempted confutation of scepticism, since it cannot affect the serious internal belief of the sceptic, which is the same before as after argument: unshaken by the ingenuity of his own reasonings, or rather, as I have before remarked, tacitly assumed and affirmed in that very combat of argument which professes to deny it.

It is in vain that Berkeley asserts his system with a zeal and acuteness which might, perhaps, have succeeded in convincing others, if they could only have previously succeeded in convincing himself, not as a speculative philosopher merely, but as a human being, conversant with his kind—acting, and suffering, and remembering, and hoping and fearing. This, however, was more than mere ingenuity of argument could perform. Even in publishing his work with the sincere desire of instructing and converting others, the great and primary convert was yet to be made in the converter himself.

In the *Life of Berkeley*, prefixed to the edition of his collected works, an account is given of a visit which he paid at Paris, to Malebranche, the celebrated author of a system in many respects similar to his own. He found him in a weak state of health, but abundantly eager to enter into disputation on a science which he loved, and especially on his own doctrines, which he loved still more; but the discussion was at last carried on with more vehemence than the feeble bodily frame

of Malebranche could bear ; and his death was said to be occasioned, or at least hastened, by this unfortunate intellectual combat. When we consider this interview of two illustrious men, each of whom, in accordance with his own system, must have been incapable of any direct knowledge of the existence of the other, the violent reciprocal action of these mutual nonentities might seem ludicrous, if there were not, in the death of any one, and especially of a philosopher so estimable in every respect as the author of *The Search of Truth*, something too serious to be consistent with any feeling of levity. It is more suitable, both to the occasion itself and to our own intellectual weakness, to regard this accidental interview of two philosophers contending so strenuously against each other for the truth of doctrines, which rendered the real existence of each, at best, very problematical, as only a striking instance of the readiness with which all the pride of human reason yields itself, as it were, spontaneously and humbly, to the sway of those more powerful principles which He, who has arranged our mental constitution, has so graciously accommodated to the circumstances in which He has placed us. The gift of reason itself, that most inestimable of our intellectual gifts, would have been truly, if nothing more had been added to it, a perilous acquisition to beings not absolutely incapable of error : since there are points on which a single mistake, if there had been no opportunity of repairing it, might have been fatal, not to our happiness merely, but to our very existence. On these points, however, Nature has not left us to a power so fallible, and to indolence, which might forget to exercise even this feeble power. She has given us principles which do not err, and which operate without the necessity of any effort on our part. In the wildest



speculative errors into which we may be led, there is a voice within which speaks, indeed, only in a whisper, but in a whisper of omnipotence, at which the loud voice that led us astray is still: thus operating on our mind as the secret irresistible influence of gravitation operates on our body, preserving it, amid all the disorder and irregularity of its spontaneous motions, still attached to that earthly home which has been prepared with every bountiful provision for our temporary residence.

If there were, indeed, any sceptic as to the existence of an external world, who could seriously profess that his practical conduct was in accordance with his speculative disbelief, we might very justly exercise, with respect to his own profession, that philosophic doubt or disbelief which he recommends. Pyrrho, the great founder of this philosophy, is, indeed, said to have acted so truly on his principles, that if a cart ran against him, or a dog attacked him, or if he came upon a precipice, he would not stir a foot to avoid the danger. "But his attendants," says Dr Reid, "who, happily for him, were not so great sceptics, took care to keep him out of harm's way: so that he lived till he was ninety years of age."<sup>1</sup> In all these cases, we may safely take for granted that this venerable sceptic, when he exhibited himself with his train of domestics, knew, at least, as well as the spectators, the nature of the comedy which he was acting, for their entertainment and his own imagined glory; that he could discriminate, with perfect accuracy, the times when it would be safe, and the times when it would be unsafe, for him to be consistent; and that he would never feel, in so strong and lively a manner, the force of his own principles, as when he was either absolutely

<sup>1</sup> Reid's *Inquiry into the Human Mind*, chap. i., sect. 5.

alone, or with attendants within a very few inches of the ground on which he was philosophizing. We are told, accordingly, that when his passions were too strongly roused to allow him to remember the part which he was acting, he entered with sufficient readiness into his native character of a mere human being. Of this, one ludicrous instance is recorded, in which his anger against his cook so completely got the better, both of his moral and physical philosophy, that, with the spit in his hand, and the meat on it, which had been roasting, he pursued him to the very market-place. Many stories of this sort, however, we may well suppose would be invented against philosophers of a class that at once challenged the opposition of the whole mob of mankind, and afforded subjects of that obvious and easy ridicule which the mob of mankind, even without the provocation of such a challenge, are always sufficiently ready to seize.

Into a detail of the sceptical system of Berkeley it is unnecessary to enter at any length; since, notwithstanding the general acuteness which its truly illustrious author has displayed in this, and in all his works, I cannot but consider his ideal system as presenting a very imperfect and inaccurate view, not merely of the real phenomena of the mind, but even of the sceptical argument against the existence of matter. It was not as a sceptic, however, that this most devout and amiable of philosophers, to whom Pope scarcely paid a higher compliment than was strictly due, in ascribing to him "every virtue under heaven,"<sup>1</sup>—it was not as a sceptic that he was desirous of being ranked. On the contrary, I have no doubt that his system seemed to him valuable, chiefly for being, as he conceived, an antidote to scepticism;

<sup>1</sup> Epilogue to the Satires, Dial. II. v. 73.



and that he was far less anxious to display acuteness than to expose the sophistry of materialism, and to present, as he thought, an additional argument for the existence of a divine omnipresent mind, which unquestionably it would have afforded, and an argument, too, it must be owned, completely irresistible, if our mere ideas were what he conceived them to be. These he evidently considered not as states of the individual mind, but as separate things existing in it, and capable of existing in other minds, but in them alone; and it is in consequence of these assumptions that his system, if it were to be considered as a system of scepticism, is chiefly defective. But having, as he supposed, these ideas, and conceiving that they did not perish when they ceased to exist in his mind, since the same ideas recurred at intervals, he deduced, from the necessity which there seemed for some omnipresent mind, in which they might exist during the intervals of recurrence, the necessary existence of the Deity; and if, indeed, as he supposed, ideas be something different from the mind itself, recurring only at intervals to created minds, and incapable of existing but in mind, the demonstration of some infinite omnipresent mind, in which they exist during these intervals of recurrence to finite minds, must be allowed to be perfect. The precise nature of the argument, and its demonstrative force, if the hypothetical circumstances, which Berkeley himself was far from considering as hypothetical, be admitted, have not been sufficiently regarded by philosophers, when they express their astonishment that a system, which, if not scepticism, is, at least, so much akin to it, or so favourable, at least, to the general sceptical spirit, should yet have been brought forward, as its truly pious author informs us, for the express purpose of combat-

ing scepticism. He is not, indeed, always a very perspicuous unfold of his own opinions; but, in a passage of his third Dialogue, the series of propositions which I have now stated as constituting his demonstration, are delivered by himself with great distinctness and brevity. "When I deny," says Philonous to Hylas, "when I deny sensible things an existence out of the mind, I do not mean my mind in particular, but all minds. Now, it is plain they have an existence exterior to my mind, since I find them, by experience, to be independent of it. There is, therefore, some other mind wherein they exist during the intervals between the times of my perceiving them as likewise they did before my birth, and would do after my supposed annihilation. And as the same is true with regard to all other finite created spirits, it necessarily follows there is an Omnipresent Eternal Mind, which knows and comprehends all things, and exhibits them to our view in such a manner, and according to such rules, as he himself hath ordained, and are by us all termed the Laws of Nature."<sup>1</sup>

The existence of ideas as separate from the mind, and the permanent existence of these when they have ceased to exist in the individual mind, are evidently assumptions as gratuitous as the assumption of the external existence of matter itself could have been; or rather, the permanent and independent ideas are truly matter, under another name; and to believe that these foreign independent substances, which pass from mind to mind, exist in the mind, is not to intellectualize matter, but to materialize intellect. A mind containing, or capable of containing, something foreign within itself, and not merely one foreign substance, but a multitude of foreign substances at the same

<sup>1</sup> Three Dialogues, &c., p. 109-110.

moment, is no longer that simple indivisible existence, which we termed spirit. Any of the elementary atoms of matter is, indeed, more truly spiritual; the very notion of recipiency of any kind being as little consistent with our notion of mind as the notion of hardness or squareness.

The whole force of the pious demonstration, therefore, which Berkeley flattered himself with having urged irresistibly, is completely obviated by the simple denial that ideas are anything more than the mind itself affected in a certain manner; since, in this case, our ideas exist no longer than our mind is affected in that particular manner which constitutes each particular idea; and to say that our ideas exist in the divine mind, would thus be to say, only, that our mind itself exists in the divine mind. There is not the sensation of colour in addition to the mind, nor the sensation of fragrance in addition to the mind; but, according to that juster view of the mental phenomena which I have repeatedly endeavoured to impress on you, the sensation of colour is the mind existing in a certain state, and the sensation of fragrance is the mind existing in a different state.

The most philosophic scepticism, as to the existence of external things, is unquestionably that which is founded on this very view of the phenomena of the mind. All the terms which we use to express our knowledge, sensations, perceptions, ideas, notions, propositions, judgments, intuitions, conclusions, or whatever other terms we may employ to express particular varieties of thought, are significant, it may be said, and truly said, of states or affections of the mind, and of nothing more. What I term my perception of the colour, or softness, or shape, or fragrance, or taste of a peach, is a certain state of my own mind: for my



mind surely can be conscious only of its own feelings; or rather, as the consciousness of present feelings is a redundancy of language, my mind, affected in a certain manner, whether it be with what is termed sensation or knowledge, or belief, can still be nothing more than my mind itself affected in a certain manner,—my mind itself existing in a certain state. Against this argument, I confess that I know no mere argument which can be adduced in opposition, any more than I know any mere argument which can be adduced against the strange conclusions that are most legitimately drawn from the doctrine of the infinite divisibility of matter, and various other physical and mathematical applications of the notion of infinity. In no one of these cases, however, do we feel our belief shaken; because it is founded either on associations so early, and strong, and indissoluble, as those which we have been endeavouring to trace, or, if not on those, on principles of direct intuition, in that species of internal revelation which gives to reason itself, in the primary truths on which every argument proceeds, its divine authority; and we only smile at conclusions, in which it is impossible for us to find a single logical error, but which, from the constitution of our nature, it is physically impossible for us to admit, or to admit, at least, without an instant dissent, which renders our momentary logical admission as nugatory as if the direct existence of an external world had been established by the clearest logical demonstration.

In one of the Anniversary Orations of Sir William Jones, of which the subject is the philosophy of the Asiatics, he informs us that a system of idealism, very similar to that of Berkeley, is to be found in the metaphysics of Hindostan. The fundamental tenet of one

great school of the philosophers of that ancient land of philosophy, is the disbelief of the existence of matter; the phenomena of the seeming material universe being conceived by them to be only an illusive representation which the Deity presents to the mind, (and which they distinguish by the name of *Maja* :) while the opposite species of scepticism is to be found in another sect of their philosophers, who disbelieve the existence of mind, and reduce all the phenomena of thought to material organisation. The same subtlety and refinement of scepticism, which have led to the systems of materialism and idealism in our Western World, are to be found, we are told, in the corresponding systems of the East.<sup>1</sup>

Why is it that we are struck with no common emotion on finding, in the metaphysics of that distant country, systems of opinions so similar to our own? Is it that the notion of the immense space which separates us, unites with our conception, and impresses us, as it were, with the omnipresence of our own intellectual nature,—when we recognise, on scenes so remote, and in circumstances of society so different, the same thoughts, and doubts, and errors, which have perplexed, and occupied, and delighted ourselves? This recognition, in whatever circumstances it may occur, gives to us a feeling of more than kindred,—a sort of identity with the universal nature of man, in all its times and places. The belief which others share with us seems to be our own belief, which has passed from each to each, or is present to all, like those permanent ideas of which Berkeley speaks, that quit one intellect to exist in another. We cannot separate the thought which we remember from the

<sup>1</sup> The substance of this reference occurs in the Eleventh Anniversary Discourse.—*Works*, vol. i. p. 165-6, 4to edit.

notion of the mind which we remember to have conceived it; and it seems to us, therefore, not as if similar doubts and errors, but almost as if the very doubts and errors of our own mind, and its ardour of inquiry, and frequent disappointments, and occasional, but rare felicities of discovery, had spread and renewed themselves in a remote existence. It is this recognition of our common nature, which gives the chief interest to scenes that have been occupied with the passions of beings like ourselves. The mountains which the Titans were fabled to have heaped up in their war against Jupiter, must have excited, even in the most devout believer of Grecian mythology, emotions far less ardent and immediate than the sight of the humbler cliffs, at which the small Spartan host, and their gallant leader, devoted themselves in the defensive war against the Persian invader. The races of men may perish, but the remembrance of them still lives imperishable, and seems to claim kindred with us as often as we tread the same soil, or merely think of those who have trod it.

“Turn thy sight eastward, o’er the time-hush’d plains  
Now graves of vanish’d empire, once gleam’d o’er  
From flames on hallow’d altars, hail’d by hymns  
Of seers, awakeners of the worshipp’d Sun!  
Ask silent Tigris—Bid Euphrates tell  
Where is the grove-crown’d Baal to whose stern frown  
Bow’d haughty Babylon?—Chaldea, famed  
For star-taught sages,—hard Phœnicia’s sons,  
Fierce, fear-surmounting curbers of the deep,  
Who stretch’d a floating sceptre o’er the seas,  
And made mankind one empire?—Where is now  
Egypt’s wide-homaged Isis? where the Thors,  
That shook the shakers of the Roman world?”<sup>1</sup>

The very gods of all these countries have perished

<sup>1</sup> Aaron Hill’s *Free Thoughts on Faith*, 220-227.



but the mortals who bent the knee before them still survive them in the immortality of our common nature,—in that universal interest which gives to us a sort of intellectual existence in scenes and times the most remote, and makes the thoughts and emotions of others as it were a part of our own being,—uniting the past, the present, and the future, and blending man with man wherever he is to be found.

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### LECTURE XXV.

#### *Examination of Dr Reid's supposed Confutation of Idealism.*

My last Lecture, Gentlemen, brought to a conclusion the remarks which I had to offer on the Sense of Touch, and particularly on the manner in which I supposed the mind to acquire its knowledge of external things.

With this very important question of the existence of matter the name of Dr Reid is intimately connected, to whom the highest praise is usually given for his supposed confutation of all scepticism on the subject; as if he had truly established, by argument, the existence of a material world. And yet I confess, with all my respect for that excellent philosopher, I do not discover, in his reasonings on the subject, any ground for the praise which has been given. The evidence for a system of external things, at least the sort of evidence for which he contends, was not merely the same, but was felt also to be precisely the same, before he wrote as afterwards. Nay, I may add, that the force of the evidence, if that term can be justly applied to this species of belief, was admitted,

in its fullest extent, by the very sceptic against whom chiefly his arguments were directed.

That Dr Reid was a philosopher of no common rank, every one who has read his works with attention and with candour must admit. It is impossible to deny, that to great power of patient investigation, in whatever inquiries he undertook, he united great caution in discriminating the objects of legitimate inquiry, together with considerable acuteness, of the same sage and temperate kind, in the prosecution of such inquiries as appeared to him legitimate. And,—which is a praise that, unfortunately for mankind, and still more unfortunately for the individual, does not always attend mere intellectual renown,—it is impossible to deny to him the more covetable glory, that his efforts, even when he erred speculatively, had always in view those great interests, to which, and to which alone, philosophy itself is but a secondary consideration,—the primary and essential interests of religion and morality.

These praises are certainly not higher than his merits. But, at the same time, while, by philosophers in one part of the island, his merits seem to have been unjustly undervalued, I cannot but think, also, that, in his own country, there has been an equal, or rather a far greater tendency to overrate them, a tendency arising in part from the influence of his academic situation and his amiable personal character, partly, and in a very high degree, from the general regard for the moral and religious objects which he uniformly had in view, as contrasted with the consequences that were supposed to flow from some of the principles of the philosopher whose opinions he particularly combated, and partly also, I may add, from the eloquence of his illustrious Pupil, and Friend, and Biographer,



whose understanding, so little liable to be biassed by any prejudices but those of virtue and affectionate friendship, has yet, perhaps, been influenced in some degree by those happy and noble prejudices of the heart, and who, by the persuasive charms both of his Lectures and of his writings, could not fail to cast, on any system of opinions which he might adopt and exhibit, some splendour of reflection from the brilliancy of his own mind.

The genius of Dr Reid does not appear to me to have been very inventive, nor to have possessed much of that refined and subtle acuteness, which, capable as it is of being abused, is yet absolutely necessary to the perfection of metaphysical analysis.

It is chiefly on his opinions, in relation to the subject at present under our view, that his reputation as an original thinker rests. Indeed, it is on these that he is inclined himself to rest it. In a part of a letter to Dr Gregory, preserved in Mr Stewart's Memoir, he considers his confutation of the ideal system of perception as involving almost everything which is truly his. "I think there is hardly anything that can be called mine," he says, "in the philosophy of mind, which does not follow with ease from the detection of this prejudice."<sup>1</sup> Yet there are few circumstances connected with the fortune of modern philosophy, that appear to me more wonderful, than that a mind like Dr Reid's, so learned in the history of metaphysical science, and far too honourable to lay claim to praise to which he did not think himself fairly entitled, should have conceived that, on the point of which he speaks, any great merit—at least any merit of originality—was justly referable to him particularly. In-

<sup>1</sup> Account of the Life, &c., p. xci, prefixed to Reid's Works. Edin. 1803.

deed, the only circumstance which appears to me more wonderful, is that the claim thus made by him should have been so readily and generally admitted.

His supposed confutation of the ideal system is resolvable into two parts, first, his attempt to overthrow what he terms "the common theory" of ideas or images of things in the mind, as the immediate objects of thought; and secondly, the evidence which the simpler theory of perception may be supposed to yield, of the reality of an external world. The latter of these inquiries would, in order, be more appropriate to our late train of speculation; but we cannot understand it fully, without some previous attention to the former.

That Dr Reid did question the theory of ideas or images, as separate existences in the mind, I readily admit; but I cannot allow that, in doing this, he questioned the common theory. On the contrary, I conceive that, at the time at which he wrote, the theory had been universally, or at least almost universally, abandoned; and that, though philosophers might have been in the habit of speaking of ideas or images in the mind, as we continue to speak of them at this moment, they meant them to denote nothing more then than we use them to denote now. The phraseology of any system of opinions which has spread widely and for a length of time, does not perish with the system itself. It is transmitted from the system which expires, to the system which begins to reign,—very nearly, as the same crown and sceptre pass, through a long succession, from monarch to monarch. To tear away our very language, as well as our belief, is more than the boldest introducer of new doctrines can hope to be permitted, for it would be to force our ignorance or error too glaringly on our view. He finds it easier to seduce our vanity, by leaving us



philosophers, with respect to the phenomena of perception, and the intellectual phenomena in general. I have avoided it, partly on account of its general ambiguity, but more especially with a view to the question at present before us, that, on examining it, you might be as free as possible from any prejudice arising from our former applications of the term.

The term, I conceive, though convenient for its brief expression of a variety of phenomena, which might otherwise require a more paraphrastic expression, might yet be omitted altogether, in the metaphysical vocabulary, without any great inconvenience; certainly without inconvenience equal to that which arises from the ambiguous use of it, with different senses, by different authors. But, whatever ambiguity it may have had, the notion of it, as an image in the mind separate and distinct from the mind itself, had certainly been given up long before Dr Reid had published a single remark on the subject. In its present general use, it is applied to many species of the mental phenomena,—to our particular sensations or perceptions, simple or complex,—to the remembrances of these, either as simple or complex,—and to the various compositions or decompositions of these which result from certain intellectual processes of the mind itself. The presence of certain rays of light, for example, at the retina, is followed by a certain affection of the sensorial organ, which is immediately followed by a certain affection of the sentient mind. This particular affection, which is more strictly and definitely termed the sensation or perception of redness, is likewise sometimes termed, when we speak more in reference to the external light which causes the sensation, than to ourselves as sentient of it, an idea of redness; and when, in some train of internal thought, without the



renewed presence of the rays, a certain state of the mind arises, different indeed from the former, but having a considerable resemblance to it, we term this state the conception or remembrance of redness, or the idea of redness; or, combining this particular idea with others, which have not co-existed with it as a sensation, we form what we term the complex idea of a red tree, or a red mountain, or some other of those shadowy forms, over which Fancy, in the moment of creating them, flings at pleasure her changeful colouring. An idea, however, in all these applications of the term, whether it be a perception, a remembrance, or one of those complex or abstract varieties of conception, is still nothing more than the mind affected in a certain manner, or, which is the same thing, the mind existing in a certain state. The idea is not distinct from the mind, or separable from it, in any sense, but is truly the mind itself, which, in its very belief of external things, is still recognising one of the many forms of its own existence.

*"Qualis Hamadryadum, quondam, si forte sororum  
Una novos peragrans saltus et devia rura,  
(Atque illam in viridi suadet procumbere ripa  
Fontis pura quies et opaci frigoris umbra)  
Dum prona in latices speculi de margine pendet,  
Mirata et subitam venienti occurrere Nympham :  
Mox eosdem quos ipsa artus, eadem ora gerentem  
Una inferre gradus, una succedere sylvam,  
Aspicit alludens, seseque agnoscit in nudis.  
Sic sensu interno rerum simulaera suarum  
Mens ciet, et proprios observat conscia vultus."*<sup>1</sup>

In sensation there is, as we have seen, a certain series; the presence of the external body, whatever this may be in itself independently of our perception;

<sup>1</sup> Gray, de Princip. Cogit., Lib. 1. v. 143-153.

the organic affection, whatever it may be, which attends the presence of this body ; and the affection of mind that is immediately subsequent to the organic affection. I speak only of one organic affection ; because, with respect to the mind, it is of no consequence whether there be one only or a series of these, prior to the new mental state induced. It is enough that, whenever the immediate sensorial organ has begun to exist in a certain state, whether the change which produces this state be single, or second, third, fourth, or fifth, of a succession of changes, the mind is instantly affected in a certain manner. This new mental state induced is sensation.

But, says Dr Reid, the sensation is accompanied with a perception which is very different from it : and on this difference of sensation and perception is founded the chief part of his system. The distinction thus made by him, has been commonly, though very falsely, considered as original ; the radical difference itself, whether accurate or inaccurate, and the minor distinctions founded upon this, being laid down with precision in some of the common elementary works of logic, of a much earlier period.

“ When I smell a rose,” he says, “ there is in this operation both sensation and perception. The agreeable odour I feel, considered by itself without relation to any external object, is merely a sensation. It affects the mind in a certain way ; and this affection of the mind may be conceived without a thought of the rose, or any other object. This sensation can be nothing else than it is felt to be. Its very essence consists in being felt ; and when it is not felt, it is not. There is no difference between the sensation and the feeling of it ; they are one and the same thing. It is for this reason that we before observed, that, in sensation, there

is no object distinct from that act of the mind by which it is felt; and this holds true with regard to all sensations.

"Let us next attend to the perception which we have in smelling a rose. Perception has always an external object; and the object of my perception, in this case, is that quality in the rose which I discern by the sense of smell. Observing that the agreeable sensation is raised when the rose is near, and ceases when it is removed, I am led, by my nature, to conclude some quality to be in the rose which is the cause of this sensation. This quality in the rose is the object perceived; and that act of my mind, by which I have the conviction and belief of this quality, is what in this case I call perception."<sup>1</sup>

That the reference to an external object is in this case something more than the mere sensation itself, is very evident: the only question is, whether it be necessary to ascribe the reference to a peculiar power termed perception, or whether it be not rather the result of a common and more general principle of the mind.

When I smell a rose, that is to say, when certain odorous particles act on my organ of smell, a certain state of mind is produced, which constitutes the sensation of that particular fragrance; and this is all which can justly be ascribed to the mind as simply sentient. But the mind is not sensitive merely, in the strict sense of that term: for there are many states of it which do not depend on the immediate presence of external objects. Those feelings, of any kind, which have before existed together, or in trains of succession, arise afterwards, as it were spontaneously, in consequence merely of the existence of some other part of the train. When the fragrance of a rose, therefore,

<sup>1</sup> On the Intellectual Powers, Essay II. c. 16.



has been frequently accompanied with the sensations of vision that arise when a rose is before us, or with the muscular and tactual sensations that arise on handling it, the mere fragrance, of itself, will afterwards suggest these sensations; and this suggestion is all which, in the case of smell instanced by Dr Reid, is termed the perception, as distinguished from the mere sensation. We ascribe the fragrance to the unseen external rose, precisely in the same manner as we ascribe smoke and ashes to previous combustion; or, from a portrait, or a pictured landscape, infer the existence of some artist who painted it. Yet, in inferring the artist from the picture, it is surely not to any mere power of sense that we ascribe the inference; and as little should we trace, to any such simple power, what is in this instance termed perception. The perception is a suggestion of memory, combined with the simple sensation. There are not, in ascribing the smell to odorous particles of a rose, as its cause, sensation, perception, and association or suggestion, as three powers or general principles of the mind. But there are sensation and the associate suggestion: and, when these co-exist, perception exists; because perception is the name which we give to the union of the former two. There is, indeed, the belief of some cause of the sensation, as there is a belief of some cause of every feeling of the mind, internal as well as external; but the cause, in the case of smell, is supposed to be external and corporeal, merely because the presence of an external rose has been previously learned from another source, and is suggested when the sensation of fragrance recurs, in intimate association.

In the case of taste, to proceed to our other senses, the perception, as it is termed by Dr Reid, is precisely of the same kind—a mere reference of association.



We have previously learned, from other sources, to believe in things without; and these, as sapid bodies acting on our tongue, are suggested by the mere sensation, which, but for the means of this suggestion, would have been a sensation alone, of which the cause would have been as little conceived to be corporeal as the causes of any of the internal affections of the mind. The melody of a flute, if we had had no sense but that of hearing—the redness of a rose, if we had had no sense but that of vision, would as little, as the sensation of smell when considered as a transient state of the mind, have involved, or given occasion to, the notion of corporeal substance. We refer the melody to the external flute, the redness to the external rose, because we have previously acquired the notions of extension and resistance—of a flute and of a rose as external substances; and this reference of mere suggestion, is all which in these cases distinguishes the perception from the sensation. Without the suggestions of memory, in short, we could not in these cases have had, in Dr Reid's sense of the term, any perceptions whatever to distinguish the causes of our sensations as external, more than the causes of any of our other feelings. The great source of perception, then, in the sense in which he understands the term, is that by which we primarily form the complex notion of extension and resistance—that which has parts, and that which resists our attempt to grasp it—since all the other perceptions of which he speaks, in contradistinction from mere sensations, are only these complex notions, suggested by the particular sensations, and combined with them in consequence of former association, and the general reference to a cause of some sort, which may be supposed to attend our feelings of every kind, internal as well as external, when considered as changes

or new phenomena. It is not, however, from any peculiar power, to be distinguished by the name of perception, that this complex notion of extended resistance appears to me to arise; but from the union of our notion of extension, acquired by the mere remembrance of various progressive series of feelings with the notion of resistance, when an accustomed series of muscular feelings, without any change of circumstances in the mind itself, is interrupted by that peculiar and very different muscular feeling which arises from impeded effort. Perception, in short, in all our senses, is nothing more than the association of this complex notion with our other sensations—the notion of something extended and resisting, suggested by these sensations, when the sensations themselves have previously arisen; and suggested in the same manner, and on the same principle, as any other associate feeling suggests any other associate feeling.

It is very evident that perception, in Dr Reid's sense, is not the mere reference to a cause of some sort, for it would then be as comprehensive as all the feelings or changes of the mind—our hope, fear, anger, pity, which we ascribe to some cause or antecedent—as much as our tastes and smells; it is the reference of certain feelings to a corporeal cause, that is to say, to a cause extended and resisting. If, for example, without any previous knowledge of external things, on the first sensation of fragrance, or sweetness, or sound, or colour, we could be supposed to be capable of believing that there was some cause of this new state of our being, this would not be perception in the sense in which he uses that term; and yet, but for our organ of touch, or at least but for feelings which are commonly ascribed to that organ, it would be manifestly impossible for us to make more than this vague and general

inference. When a rose is present, we find, and have uniformly found, that a certain sensation of fragrance arises, which ceases when the rose is removed. The influence of association, therefore, operates in this as in every other case of ordinary co-existence. We do not merely suppose that the sensation has some cause, as we believe that our joys and sorrows have a cause; but we ascribe the fragrance to the external substance, the presence of which we have found to be so essential to the production of it. Perception, in every case, as I have said, in which it is to be distinguished from the prior sensation, is a reference of this prior sensation to a material cause; and this complex notion of a material cause—that is to say, of something extended and resisting—mere smell, mere taste, mere hearing, mere vision, never could have afforded. I have already explained how this notion of matter, as it appears to me, is produced, or may be imagined to be produced. A train of muscular feelings has been frequently repeated, so that the series has become familiar to the infant, constituting in its remembrance the notion of a certain progressive length. When all the known antecedent circumstances have been the same, the well-known series is suddenly broken, so as to excite in the mind of the infant the notion of a cause which is not in itself: this cause, which is something foreign to itself, is that which excites the particular muscular feeling of resistance; and it is combined with the notion of a certain length, because it uniformly supplies the place of what has been felt as a certain length,—so as at last, by the operation of the common laws of association, to become truly representative of it, or rather to involve it in one complex feeling, in the same manner as colour, in vision, seems to involve whole miles of distance. Such is all that seems to me



to constitute what Dr Reid would term perception, even with respect to the feelings commonly termed tactual; and in all the other classes of sensations, it is obviously nothing more than the suggestion of these associate feelings, in the same way as any other feelings, in our trains of thought and emotion, are suggested by those conceptions or other feelings which have frequently accompanied them. It is sufficient to think of a mind, possessing all the other susceptibilities of sensation, but those which give us the perceptions commonly ascribed to touch, to be sensible how truly what we term perception in the other senses, is the mere suggestion of these. If we were capable only of smelling,—or had no other sensations than those of mere taste, mere sound, mere colour,—what perception could we have had of a material cause of these sensations? and if it be to the mere suggestion of the object of another sense that we owe what is termed perception in all these sensations, in what circumstance does the reference of these to a remote and extended substance differ from any other of the common references which the principle of association enables us to make?

“Sensation,” says Dr Reid, “can be nothing more than it is felt to be. Its very essence consists in being felt; and when it is not felt, it is nothing.” There is no difference between the sensation and the feeling of it; they are one and the same thing. It is as surely equally true of what he terms perception as a state of mind, it must be remembered, according to his own account of it, as the perception of an object perceived as the sensation. It is the mental state of perception as such, and as indeed we must say of all perceptions.

<sup>1</sup> See *ibid.*

ever they may be, that it can be nothing else than it is felt to be. Its very essence consists in being felt; and when it is not felt, it is not. There is no difference between the perception and the feeling of it; they are one and the same thing. The sensation, indeed, which is mental, is different from the object exciting it, which we term material; but so also is the state of mind which constitutes perception: for Dr Reid was surely too zealous an opponent of the systems which ascribe everything to mind alone, or to matter alone, to consider the perception as itself the object perceived. That in sensation, as contradistinguished from perception, there is no reference made to an external object, is true; because, when the reference is made, we then use the new term of perception; but that in sensation there is no object distinct from that act of the mind by which it is felt, no object independent of the mental feeling, is surely a very strange opinion of this philosopher; since what he terms perception is nothing but the reference of this very sensation to its external object. The sensation itself he certainly supposes to depend on the presence of an external object, which is all that can be understood in the case of perception, when we speak of its objects, or, in other words, of those external causes to which we refer our sensations: for the material object itself he surely could not consider as forming a part of the perception which is a state of the mind alone. To be the object of perception, is nothing more than to be the foreign cause or occasion on which this state of the mind directly or indirectly arises; and an object, in this only intelligible sense, as an occasion, or cause of a certain subsequent effect, must, on his own principles, be equally allowed to sensation. Though he does not inform us what he means by the term *object*,



as peculiarly applied to perception, (and, indeed, if he had explained it, I cannot but think that a great part of his system, which is founded on the confusion of this single word, as something different from a mere external cause of an internal feeling, must have fallen to the ground,) he yet tells us, very explicitly, that to be the object of perception, is something more than to be the external occasion on which that state of the mind arises which he terms perception; for, in arguing against the opinion of a philosopher who contends for the existence of certain images or traces in the brain, and yet says, "that we are not to conceive the images or traces in the brain to be perceived, as if there were eyes in the brain; these traces are only occasions on which, by the laws of the union of soul and body, ideas are excited in the mind; and, therefore, it is not necessary that there should be an exact resemblance between the traces and the things represented by them, any more than that words or signs should be exactly like the things signified by them:"<sup>1</sup>—He adds, "These two opinions, I think, cannot be reconciled. For, if the images or traces in the brain are perceived, they must be the objects of perception, and not the occasions of it only. On the other hand, if they are only the occasions of our perceiving, they are not perceived at all."<sup>2</sup> Did Dr Reid, then, suppose that the feeling, whatever it may be, which constitutes perception as a state of the mind, or, in short, all of which we are conscious in perception, is not strictly and exclusively mental, as much as all of which we are conscious in remembrance, or in love, or hate; or did he wish us to believe that matter itself, in any of its forms, is, or can be, a part of the phenomena or states of the

<sup>1</sup> On the Intellectual Powers, Essay II. c. viii.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

mind—a part, therefore, of that mental state or feeling which we term a perception? Our sensations, like our remembrances or emotions, we refer to some cause or antecedent. The difference is, that in the one case we consider the feeling as having for its cause some previous feeling or state of the mind itself; in the other case we consider it as having for its cause something which is external to ourselves, and independent of our transient feelings,—something which, in consequence of former feelings suggested at the moment, it is impossible for us not to regard as extended and resisting. But still, what we thus regard as extended and resisting is known to us only by the feelings which it occasions in our mind. What matter, in its relation to the percipient mind, can be, but the cause or occasion, direct or indirect, of that class of feelings which I term sensations or perceptions, it is absolutely impossible for me to conceive.

The percipient mind, in no one of its affections, can be said to be the mass of matter which it perceives, unless the separate existence, either of matter or of mind, be abandoned by us; the existence of either of which, Dr Reid would have been the last of philosophers to yield. He acknowledges that our perceptions are consequent on the presence of external bodies, not from any necessary connexion subsisting between them, but merely from the arrangement which the Deity, in his wisdom, has chosen to make of their mutual phenomena: which is surely to say, that the Deity has rendered the presence of the external object the occasion of that affection of the mind which is termed perception; or, if it be not to say this, it is to say nothing. Whatever state of mind perception may be; whether a primary result of a peculiar power, or a mere secondary reference of association that follows

the particular sensation, of which the reference is made, it is itself, in either view of it, but a state of the mind; and to be the external occasion or antecedent of this state of mind, since it is to produce, directly or indirectly, all which constitutes perception, is surely, therefore, to be perceived, or there must be something in the mere word perceived, different from the physical reality which it expresses.

The confusion of Dr Reid's notions on this subject seems to have arisen from a cause which has been the chief source of the general confusion that prevails in intellectual science; and, indeed, it was principally with the view of exhibiting this confusion, and its source to you strongly, that I have dwelt so long on a criticism, which, to those among you who are not acquainted with the extensive and important applications that have been made of this doctrine, may, perhaps, have appeared of very little interest. Dr Reid, it is evident, was not sufficiently in the habit of considering the phenomena of the mind,—its perceptions, as well as its remembrances, judgments, passions, and all its other affections, whatever these may be,—in the light in which I have represented them to you, merely as the mind affected, in a certain manner, according to certain regular laws of succession, but as something more mysterious than the subject of this sequence of feelings; for, but for this notion of something more mysterious, the object of perception, and the external occasion of that state of mind which we term perception, must have conveyed precisely the same notion. To have a clear view of the phenomena of the mind, as mere affections or states of it, existing successively, and in a certain series, which we are able, therefore, to predict, in consequence of our knowledge of the past, is, I conceive, to have made the



most important acquisition which the intellectual inquirer can make. To say, merely, that it is to have learned to distinguish that which may be known from that which never can be known, and which it therefore would be an idle waste of labour to attempt to discover, would be to say far too little. It is to see the mind, in a great measure, as it is in nature, divested of everything foreign, passing instantly from thought to thought, from sensation to sensation, in almost endless variety of states, and differing as completely from that cumbrous representation of it which philosophers are fond of representing to us, as the planets, revolving freely in the immense space of our solar system, differ from those mimic orbs which, without any principle of motion in themselves, are, as it were, dragged along in the complex mechanism of our orreries.

In objecting, however, to Dr Reid's notion of perception, I am far from wishing to erase the word from our metaphysical vocabulary. On the contrary, I conceive it to be a very convenient one, if the meaning attached to it be sufficiently explained by an analysis of the complex state of mind which it denotes, and the use of it confined rigidly to cases in which it has this meaning. Sensation may exist, without any reference to an external cause, in the same manner as we may look at a picture, without thinking of the painter, or read a poem, without thinking of the poet; or it may exist with reference to an external cause: and it is convenient, therefore, to confine the term sensation to the former of these cases, and perception to the latter. But, then, it must be understood, that the perception is nothing but the suggestion of ideas associated with the simple SENSATION, as it originally took place; or is only another name for



the original simple sensation itself, in the cases, if any such there be, in which sensation involves, immediately in itself, the belief of some existence external to the sentient mind; or is only a mere inference, like all our other inferences, if it arise, in the manner in which I have endeavoured to explain to you how the notions of extension and resistance in an external cause of our feelings might arise, and be afterwards suggested in association with other feelings that had frequently accompanied it.

To give a brief summary, however, of the argument which I have urged: in that state of acquired knowledge, long after the first elementary feelings of infancy, in which modified state alone the phenomena of the mind can become to us objects of reflective analysis, certain feelings are referred by us to an external material cause. The feelings themselves, as primarily excited, are termed sensations, and, when followed by the reference to an external cause, receive the name of perceptions; which marks nothing more in addition to the primary sensations, than this very reference. But what is the reference itself, in consequence of which the new name is given? It is the suggestion of some extended resisting object, the presence of which had before been found to be attended with that particular sensation which is now again referred to it. If we had had no sense but that of smell; no sense but that of taste; no sense but that of sound; no sense but that of sight; we could not have known the existence of extended resisting substances, and, therefore, could not have referred the pleasant or painful sensations of those classes to such external causes, more than we refer directly, to an external cause, any painful or pleasing emotion, or other internal affection of the mind. In all but one class of our sensations, then,

it is evident that what Dr Reid calls perception, as the operation of a peculiar mental faculty, is nothing more than a suggestion of memory or association, which differs in no respect from other suggestions, arising from other co-existences or successions of feelings, equally uniform or frequent. It is only in a single class of sensations, therefore,—that which Dr Reid ascribes to touch,—that perception, which he regards as a peculiar faculty, extending to all our sensations, can be said to have any primary operation, even though we should agree with him in supposing that our belief of extended resistance is not reducible by analysis to any more general principles. If, however, my analysis of the complex notion of matter be just, perception, in its relation to our original sensations of touch, as much as in relation to the immediate feelings which we derive from smell, taste, sight, and hearing, is only one of the many operations of the suggesting or associating principle. But, even on his own principles, I repeat, it must be confined to the single class of feelings, which he considers as tactual, and is not an original principle, co-extensive with all the original varieties of sensation. Even in the single class to which it is thus, on his own principles, to be confined, it is not so much what he would term a faculty, as an intuitive belief, by which we are led irresistibly, on the existence of certain sensations, to ascribe these to causes that are external and corporeal; or, if we give the name of faculty to this peculiar form of intuition, we should give it equally to all our intuitions, and rank among our faculties the belief of the continued order of Nature, or the belief of our own identity, as much as our belief of external things, if our senses themselves are unable to give us any information of them.

## LECTURE XXVI.

*The same subject, continued.*

My last Lecture, Gentlemen, was chiefly employed in considering the nature of that complex process which takes place in the mind, when we ascribe the various classes of our sensations to their various external objects; to the analysis of which process we were led, by the importance which Dr Reid has attached to the distinction of sensation and perception;—a sensation, as understood by him, being the simple feeling that immediately follows the action of an external body on any of our organs of sense, considered merely as a feeling of the mind; the corresponding perception being the reference of this feeling to the external body as its cause.

The distinction I allowed to be a convenient one, if the nature of the complex process which it expresses be rightly understood. The only question that seemed, philosophically, of importance, with respect to it, was, whether the perception in this sense,—the reference of the sensation to its external corporeal cause,—implies, as Dr Reid contends, a peculiar mental power, co-extensive with sensation, to be distinguished by a peculiar name in the catalogue of our faculties, or be not merely one of the results of a more general power, which is afterwards to be considered by us—the power of association—by which one feeling suggests, or induces, other feelings that have formerly co-existed with it.

It would be needless to recapitulate the argument minutely, in its relation to all the senses. That of smell, which Dr Reid has himself chosen as an example, will be sufficient for our retrospect.



Certain particles of odorous matter act on my nostrils; a peculiar sensation of fragrance arises; I refer this sensation to a rose. This reference, which is unquestionably something superadded to the original sensation itself, is what Dr Reid terms the perception of the fragrant body. But what is the reference itself, and to what source is it to be ascribed? That we should have supposed our sensations to have had a cause of some sort, as we suppose a cause of all our feelings internal as well as external, may indeed be admitted. But if I had had no other sense than that of smell; if I had never seen a rose; or, rather, since the knowledge which vision affords is chiefly of a secondary kind, if I had no mode of becoming acquainted with the compound of extension and resistance, which the mere sensations of smell, it is evident, are incapable of affording,—could I have made this reference of my sensation to a quality of a fragrant body? Could I, in short, have had more than the mere sensation itself, with that general belief of a cause of some sort, which is not confined to our sensations, but is common to them with all our other feelings?

By mere smell, as it appears to me, I could not have become acquainted with the existence of corporeal substances,—in the sense in which we now understand the term corporeal,—nor, consequently, with the qualities of corporeal substances; and, if so, how could I have had that perception of which Dr Reid speaks—that reference to a fragrant body, of which, as a body, I was before in absolute ignorance? I should, indeed, have ascribed the sensation to some cause or antecedent, like every other feeling; but I could as little have ascribed it to a bodily cause, as any feeling of joy or sorrow. I refer it now to a rose; because, being en-



dowed with other sensitive capacities, I have previously learned, from another source, the existence of causes without, extended and resisting; because I have previously touched or seen a rose, when the sensation of fragrance co-existed with my visual or tactual sensation; and all which distinguishes the perception from the mere sensation, is this suggestion of former experience, which reminds me now of other feelings, with the continuance or cessation of which, in innumerable former instances, the fragrance itself also continued or ceased. The perception, in short, in smell, taste, hearing, is a sensation suggesting, by association, the notion of some extended and resisting substance, fragrant, sapid, vibratory,—a notion which smell alone, taste alone, hearing alone, never could have afforded; but which, when once received from any other source, may be suggested by these as readily as any other associate feeling that has frequently co-existed with them. To the simple primary sensations of vision the same remark may be applied. A mere sensation of colour could not have made me acquainted with the existence of bodies that would resist my effort to grasp them. It is only in one sense, therefore,—that which affords us the knowledge of resistance,—that anything like original perception can be found; and even in this, the process of perception, as I formerly explained to you, implies no peculiar power, but only common sensations, with associations and inferences of precisely the same kind as those which are continually taking place in all our reasonings and trains of thought.

Extension and resistance, I need scarcely repeat, are the complex elements of what we term matter; and nothing is matter, to our conception, or a body, to use the simpler synonymous term, which does not involve these elements. If we had no other sense

than that of smell, and, therefore, could not have referred the sensations to any fragrant body, what, in Dr Reid's meaning of the term, would the supposed power of perception, in these circumstances, have been? What would it have been, in like manner, if we had had only the sense of taste in sweetness and bitterness; or of hearing, in melody; or of vision, in colour; without the capacity of knowing light as a material substance, or the bodies that vibrated, or the bodies of another kind that were sweet or bitter? It is only by the sense of touch—or, at least, by that class of perceptions which Dr Reid ascribes to touch, and which therefore, though traced by us in part to another source, I, for brevity's sake, comprehend under that term in our present discussion—it is only by touch that we become acquainted with those elements which are essential to our very notion of a body; and to touch, therefore, in his own view of it, we must be indebted, directly or indirectly, as often as we refer the sensations of any other class to a corporeal cause. Even in the supposed perceptions of touch itself, however, as we have seen, the reference of our feelings to an external cause is not demonstrative of any peculiar power of the mind to be classed separately from its other faculties. But when a body is first grasped, in infancy, by fingers that have been accustomed to contract without being impeded, we learn to consider the sensation as the result of a cause that is different from our own mind, because it breaks an accustomed series of feelings, in which all the antecedents, felt by us at the time, were such as were before uniformly followed by a different consequent, and were expected, therefore, to have again their usual consequent. The cause of the new sensation, which is thus believed to be something different from our sentient self, is regarded

by us as something which has parts, and which resists our effort, that is to say, as an external body; because the muscular feeling, excited by the object grasped, is, in the first place, the very feeling of that which we term resistance; and, secondly, because, by uniformly supplying the place of a definite portion of a progressive series of feelings, it becomes ultimately representative of that particular length of series, or number of parts, of which it thus uniformly supplies the place. Perception, then, even in that class of feelings by which we learn to consider ourselves as surrounded by substances extended and resisting, is only another name, as I have said, for the result of certain associations and inferences that flow from other more general principles of the mind; and, with respect to all our other sensations, it is only another name for the suggestion of these very perceptions of touch, or at least of the feelings, tactual and muscular, which are, by Dr Reid, ascribed to that single sense. If we had been unsusceptible of these tactual and muscular feelings, and, consequently, had never conceived the existence of anything extended and resisting till the sensation of fragrance, colour, sweetness, or sound had arisen, we should, after any one or all of these sensations, have still known as little of bodies without, as if no sensation whatever had been excited.

The distinction, then, on which Dr Reid has founded so much, involves, in his view of it, and in the view that is generally taken of it, a false conception of the nature of the process which he describes. The two words, *sensation* and *perception*, are indeed, as I have already remarked, very convenient for expressing, in one case, the mere existence of an external feeling; in the other case, the reference which the percipient mind has made of this feeling to an external cause.



But this reference is all which the perception super-adds to the sensation; and the source of the reference itself we are still left to seek in the other principles of our intellectual nature. We have no need, however, to invent a peculiar power of the mind for producing it; since there are other principles of our nature, from which it may readily be supposed to flow,—the principle by which we are led to believe that every new consequent, in a train of changes, must have had a new antecedent of some sort in the train,—and the principle of association, by which feelings that have usually co-existed suggest or become representative of each other. With these principles, it certainly is not wonderful that, when the fragrance of a rose has uniformly affected our sense of smell, as often as the flower itself was presented to us, we should ascribe the fragrance to the flower which we have seen and handled: but though it would not be wonderful that we should make it, it would indeed be wonderful if, with these principles, we did not make that very reference, for which Dr Reid thinks it necessary to have recourse to a peculiar faculty of perception.

Such, then, is the view which I would take of that distinction of sensation and perception which Dr Reid, and the philosophers who have followed him, and many of the philosophers, too, that preceded him,—for the distinction, as I have said, is far from being an original one,—have understood in a different sense; in consequence, as I cannot but think, of a defective analysis of the mental process, which constitutes the reference of our feelings of this class to causes that are without.

There is another distinction, which he has adopted from the philosophers that preceded him, and which



forms an important part of his system of perception, a distinction that is just to a certain extent, though not to the full extent, and in the precise manner, in which he and other writers have maintained it: and with respect to which, therefore, it will be necessary to point out to you how far I conceive it to be safely admissible. I allude to the division which has been formed of the primary and secondary qualities of matter.

“Every one knows that extension, divisibility, figure, motion, solidity, hardness, softness, and fluidity, were by Mr Locke called primary qualities of body; and that sound, colour, taste, smell, and heat or cold, were called secondary qualities. Is there a just foundation for this distinction? Is there anything common to the primary, which belongs not to the secondary? And what is it?

“I answer, That there appears to me to be a real foundation for the distinction; and it is this: That our senses give us a direct and a distinct notion of the primary qualities, and inform us what they are in themselves; but, of the secondary qualities, our senses give us only a relative and obscure notion. They inform us only, that they are qualities that affect us in a certain manner, that is, produce in us a certain sensation; but as to what they are in themselves, our senses leave us in the dark.

“The notion we have of primary qualities is direct, and not relative only. A relative notion of a thing is, strictly speaking, no notion of the thing at all, but only of some relation which it bears to something else.

“Thus gravity sometimes signifies the tendency of bodies towards the earth; sometimes it signifies the cause of that tendency. When it means the first, I have a direct and distinct notion of gravity: I see it,

and feel it, and know perfectly what it is; but this tendency must have a cause. We give the same name to the cause; and that cause has been an object of thought and of speculation. Now what notion have we of this cause, when we think and reason about it? It is evident we think of it as an unknown cause, of a known effect. This is a relative notion, and it must be obscure; because it gives us no conception of what the thing is, but of what relation it bears to something else. Every relation which a thing unknown bears to something that is known, may give a relative notion of it; and there are many objects of thought, and of discourse, of which our faculties can give no better than a relative notion.

“ Having premised these things, to explain what is meant by a relative notion, it is evident that our notion of primary qualities is not of this kind; we know what they are, and not barely what relation they bear to something else.

“ It is otherwise with secondary qualities. If you ask me, what is that quality or modification in a rose which I call its smell, I am at a loss to answer directly. Upon reflection I find that I have a distinct notion of the sensation which it produces in my mind. But there can be nothing like to this sensation in the rose, because it is insentient. The quality in the rose is something which occasions the sensations in me; but what that something is I know not. My senses give me no information upon this point. The only notion, therefore, my senses give is this, That smell in the rose is an unknown quality or modification, which is the cause or occasion of a sensation which I know well. The relation which this unknown quality bears to the sensation with which nature hath connected it, is all I learn from the sense of smelling; but

this is evidently a relative notion. The same reasoning will apply to every secondary quality.

"Thus I think it appears, that there is a real foundation for the distinction of primary from secondary qualities; and that they are distinguished by this, that of the primary we have by our senses a direct and distinct notion; but of the secondary only a relative notion, which must, because it is only relative, be obscure; they are conceived only as the unknown causes or occasions of certain sensations with which we are well acquainted."<sup>1</sup>

Though, as I have explained to you fully in my former Lectures, we should not, at least in far the greater number of our sensations, have considered them, originally, as proceeding from external causes, we yet, after the acquisitions of knowledge, with which the first years of our life enrich us, believe, that there is an external cause of all our sensations,—of smells and tastes, as much as of those feelings of the mind which constitute our notions of extension and resistance. But the difference, in these cases, is, that though we learn, by experience, of certain successions or co-existences of feelings, to refer to a corporeal cause our sensations of fragrance, and various other species of sensations, there is nothing in the sensation of fragrance itself, or in the other analogous sensations, of which I speak, that might not indicate as much a cause directly spiritual as a cause like that to which we at present give the name of body; while the very notion of extension and resistance combined, seems necessarily to indicate a material cause, or rather is truly that which constitutes our very notion of matter.

We believe, indeed, that our sensations of fragrance, sweetness, sound, have causes of some sort, as truly

<sup>1</sup> On the Intellectual Powers, Essay II. c. xvii.



as we believe that our feelings of extension and resistance have a cause or causes of some sort: but if we have previously given the name of matter, with direct reference to the one set of effects, and not with direct reference to the other, it necessarily follows, that, in relation to matter, as often as we speak or think of it, the qualities which correspond with the one set of effects, that have led us to use that name, must be regarded by us as primary, and the others, which may or may not co-exist with these, only as secondary. An external body may or may not be fragrant, because fragrance is not one of the qualities previously included by us in our definition of a body; but it must be extended, and present an obstacle to our compressing force, because these are the very qualities which we have included in our definition, and without which, therefore, the definition must cease to be applicable to the things defined.

If, originally, we had invented the word *matter* to denote the cause, whatever it might be, of our sensations of smell, it is very evident that fragrance would then have been to us the primary quality of matter, as being that which was essential to our definition of matter; and all other qualities, by which the cause of smell might, or might not at the same time affect our other senses, would then have been secondary qualities only, as being qualities compatible with our definition of matter, but not essential to it.

What we now term matter, however, I have repeatedly observed, is that which we consider as occupying and resisting our effort to compress it: and qualities of matter may well be said to be, by which matter itself, as thus defined, is known to us, or by the union of which is formed, we form the complex notion of matter.



and give or withhold that name according as these qualities are present or absent. Extension and resistance are the distinguishing qualities that direct us in all our applications of the word which comprehends them. They are truly primary qualities therefore; since, without our consideration of them, we never could have formed the complex notion of the substance itself, to which we afterwards, in our analysis of that complex notion, ascribe them separately as qualities; and all the other qualities, which we may afterwards find occasion to refer to an extended resisting substance, must evidently be secondary, in reference to those qualities, without which, as previously combined in our thought, we could not have had the primary notion of the substance to which we thus secondarily refer them. If, in the case which we have already frequently imagined, of the single sense of smell, we had been absolutely unsusceptible of every other external feeling, we might, indeed, have considered our sensation as the effect of some cause, and even of a cause that was different from our mind itself; but it is very evident that we could not have considered it as the effect of the presence of matter, at least as that term is now understood by us. If, in these circumstances, after frequent repetition of the fragrance, as the only quality of bodies with which we could be acquainted, we were to acquire in an instant all the other senses which we now possess, so as to become capable of forming that complex notion of things extended and resisting, which is our present notion of matter, we should then, indeed, have a fuller notion of the rose, of the mere fragrance of which we before were sensible, without knowing of what it was the fragrance, and might learn to refer the fragrance to the rose, by the same co-existences of sensations

which have led us, in our present circumstances, to combine the fragrance with other qualities, in the complex conception of the flower. Even then, however, though the fragrance, which was our first sensation, had truly been known to us before the other qualities, and though the sensation itself, therefore, as a mere sensation, would deserve the name of primary, the reference of this earlier feeling to the external rose, as its cause, would still truly be secondary to the earlier reference, or rather to the earlier combination of other qualities, in one complex whole, by which we had formed to ourselves the notion of the extended and resisting rose, as a body that admitted the subsequent reference of the delightful sensation of fragrance to be made to it, as the equal cause of these different effects.

In this sense, then, the distinction of the primary and secondary qualities of matter is just, that, whatever qualities we refer to a material cause, must be, in reference, secondary to those qualities that are essential to our very notion of the body to which the subsequent reference of the other qualities is made. We have formed our definition of matter; and, as in every other definition of every sort, the qualities included in the definition must always, in comparison of other qualities, be primary and essential, relatively to the thing defined.

Nor is this all. It will be admitted likewise, that the qualities termed primary, which alone are included in our general definitions of matter, and which are all, as we have seen, modifications of mere extension and resistance, are, even after we have learned to consider the causes of all our sensations as substances external to the mind, still felt by us to be external, with more clearness and vividness than the other qualities

which we term secondary. The difference is partly and chiefly, in the nature of the sensations themselves, as already explained to you; but depends also, I conceive, in no inconsiderable degree, on the permanence and universality of the objects which possess the primary qualities, and the readiness with which we can renew our feelings of them at will, from the constant presence of our own bodily frame, itself extended and resisting, and of the other causes of these feelings of extension and resistance, that seem to be everywhere surrounding us. Tastes, smells, sounds, even colours, though more lasting than these, are not always before us; but there is not a moment at which we cannot, by the mere stretching of our hand, produce at pleasure the feeling of something extended and resisting. It is a very natural effect of this difference, that the one set of causes which are always before us, should seem to us, therefore, peculiarly permanent, and the other set, that are only occasionally present, should seem almost as fugitive as our sensations themselves.

In these most important respects there is, then, a just ground for the distinction of the primary from the secondary qualities of bodies. They are primary in the order of our definition of matter; and they are felt by us as peculiarly permanent, independently of our feelings, which they seem at every moment ready to awake. The power of affecting us with smell, taste, sight, or hearing, may or may not be present; but the power of exciting the feelings of extension and resistance is constantly present, and is regarded by us as essential to our very notion of matter; or, in other words, we give the name of matter only where this complex perception is excited in us. We seem, therefore, to be constantly surrounded with a



corresponding feeling of our mind. It is quite evident that we cannot, in this case, appeal to experience to inform us what sensations or perceptions are more or less direct; for experience, strictly understood, does not extend beyond the feelings of our own mind, unless in this very relative belief itself, that there are certain external causes of our feelings—causes which it is impossible for us not to conceive as really existing, but of which we know nothing more than that our feelings, in all that wide variety of states of mind, which we express briefly by the terms *sensations* or *perceptions*, are made to depend on them. In the series of states in which the mind has existed, from the first moment of our life to the present hour, the feelings of extension, resistance, joy, sorrow, fragrance, colour, hope, fear, heat, cold, admiration, resentment, have often had place; and some of these feelings it has been impossible for us not to ascribe to a direct external cause; but there have not been in the mental series, which is all of which we can be conscious, both that feeling of the mind, which we term the perception of extension, and also body itself, as the cause of this feeling: for body, as an actual substance, cannot be a part of the consciousness of the mind, which is a different substance. It is sufficient for us to believe, that there are external causes of this feeling of the mind, permanent and independent of it, which produce, in regular series, all those phenomena that are found by us in the physical events of the universe, and with the continuance of which, therefore, our perceptions also will continue: we cannot truly suppose more, without conceiving our very notion of extension, a mental state, to be itself a body extended, which we have as little reason to suppose, as that our sensation of fragrance,



another mental state, is itself a fragrant body. It is needless to prolong this discussion, by endeavouring to place the argument in new points of view. The simple answer to the question, "Is our notion of extension, or of the other primary qualities of matter, a phenomenon or affection of matter or of mind?" would be of itself sufficient: for if it be a state of the mind, as much as our feeling of heat or fragrance, and a state produced by the presence of an external cause, as our sensations of heat or fragrance are produced, then there is no reason to suppose that the knowledge is, in one case, more direct than in the other. In both it is the effect of the presence of an external cause, and in both it must be relative only, to adopt Dr Reid's phrase, to that particular cause which produced it: the knowledge of which cause, in the case of extension, as much as in the case of fragrance, is nothing more than the knowledge that there is, without us, something which is not our mind itself, but which exists, as we cannot but believe, permanently, and independently of our mind, and produces, according to its own varieties, in relation to our corporeal frame, at one time, that affection of the mind which we denominate the perception of extension; at another time, that different affection of the mind, which we denominate the perception of fragrance. What it is, as it exists in absolute independence of our perceptions, we who become acquainted with it only by those very perceptions, know not, in either case; but we know it at least,—which is the only knowledge important for us,—as it exists relatively to us; that is to say, it is impossible for us, from the very constitution of our nature, not to regard the variety of our perceptions as occasioned by a corresponding variety of causes external to our mind; though, even in making this reference, we must still

believe our perceptions themselves to be altogether different and distinct from the external causes, whatever they may be, which have produced them : to be, in short, phenomena purely mental, and to be this equally, whether they relate to the primary or the secondary qualities of matter ; our notion of extension, in whatever way the Deity may have connected it with the presence of external things, being as much a state of the mind itself as our notion of sweetness or sound.

These observations, on the process of suggestion, which, in the reference to an external cause, distinguishes our perceptions from our simpler sensations, —and on the real and supposed differences of the primary and secondary qualities of matter,—will have prepared you, I trust, for understanding better the claim which Dr Reid has made to the honour of overthrowing what he has termed the ideal system of perception. It is a claim, as I have said, which appears to me truly wonderful, both as made by him and as admitted by others ; the mighty achievement which appeared to him to be the overthrow of a great system, being nothing more than the proof that certain phrases are metaphorical, which were intended by their authors to be understood only as metaphors.

In perception there is, as I have already frequently repeated, a certain series—the presence of an external object ; the affection of the sensorial organ ; the affection of the sentient mind. As the two last, however, belong to one being—the being called self—which continues the same, while the external objects around are incessantly changing, it is not wonderful, that, in speaking of perception, we should often think merely of the object as one, and of ourself (this compound of mind and matter) as also one, uniting the organic and

mental changes, in the single word which expresses our perception. To see and to hear, for example, are single words, expressive of this whole process, the bodily as well as the mental part,—for we do not consider the terms as applicable, in strict philosophic propriety, to cases in which the mere mental affection is the same, but the corporeal part is believed by us to be different,—as in sleep, or reverie, when the castle, the forest, the stream, rise before us as in reality, and we feel as if we were truly listening to voices which we love. That we feel *as if* we were listening, and feel *as if* we saw, is our language, when, in our waking hours, we speak of these phenomena of our dreams; not that we actually saw and heard: thus evidently showing that we comprehend, in these terms, when used without the qualifying words, *as if*, not the mental change of state only, but the whole process of perception, corporeal as well as mental. The mere organic part of the process, however, being of importance only as it is followed by the mental part, and being always followed by the mental part, scarcely enters into our conception, unless in cases of this sort, when we distinguish perception from vivid imagination, or when the whole compound process of perception is a subject of our philosophic inquiry. As sight, hearing, perception, involve, in a single word, a process both mental and corporeal, so, I have no doubt, the word *idea* though now confined more strictly to the feeling of the mind, was long employed with a more vague signification, so as sometimes to mean the mental affection, sometimes the organic affection, sometimes both; in the same manner as at present we speak of sight, sometimes as mental, sometimes as organic, sometimes as both. It comprehends both, when we distinguish the mountain or forest which we see, from the mountain



or forest of which we dream. It is mental only, when we speak of the pleasure of sight. It is organic only, when we say of an eye, in which the passage of the rays of light has become obstructed, that its sight is lost, or has been injured by disease.

The consideration of this double sense of the term *idea*, in some of the older metaphysical writers, corresponding with our present double sense of the word perception, as involving both the corporeal and mental part of the process, removes, I think, much of that apparent confusion which is sometimes to be found in their language on the subject; when they combine, with the term, expressions which can be understood only in a material sense, after combining with it, at other times, expressions which can be understood only of the mind: as it is not impossible that a period may arrive, when much of our reasoning, that involves no obscurity at present, may seem obscure and confused to our successors, in that career of inquiry, which, perhaps, is yet scarcely begun; merely because they may have limited, with stricter propriety, to one part of a process, terms which we now use as significant of a whole process. In the same manner, as we now exclude wholly from the term *idea* everything organic, so may everything organic hereafter be excluded from the term *sight*; and from the simple phrase, so familiar at present, that an eye has lost its sight, some future philosopher may be inclined to assert, that we, who now use that phrase, consider the perception of vision as in the material organ; and, if he have the talents of Dr Reid, he may even form a series of admirable ratiocinations, in disproof of an opinion which nobody holds, and may consider himself, and perhaps, too, if he be as fortunate as the author of the *Inquiry into the Human Mind*, may be considered by others,

as the overthrower of a mighty system of metaphysical illusion.

How truly this has been the case, in the supposed overthrow of the ideal system, I shall proceed to show in my next Lecture.

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### LECTURE XXVII.

*Dr Reid's supposed confutation of the Ideal System, continued; Hypothesis of the Peripatetics regarding Perception; and Opinions of various Philosophers on the same subject.*

THE remarks which I offered, in my last Lecture, in illustration of what have been termed the primary and secondary qualities of matter, were intended chiefly to obviate that false view of them, in which the one set of these qualities is distinguished, as affording us a knowledge that is direct, and the other set a knowledge that is relative only;—as if any qualities of matter could become known to the mind but as they are capable of affecting the mind with certain feelings, and as relative, therefore, to the feelings which they excite. What matter is, but as the cause of those various states of mind, which we denominate our sensations or perceptions, it is surely impossible for us, by perception, to discover. The physical universe, amid which we are placed, may have innumerable qualities that have no relation to our percipient mind, and qualities which, if our mind were endowed with other capacities of sensation, we might discover as readily as those which we know at present; but the qualities that have no relation to

the present state of the mind, cannot, to the mind, in its present state, be elements of its knowledge. From the very constitution of our nature, indeed, it is impossible for us not to believe that our sensations have external causes which correspond with them, and which have a permanence that is independent of our transient feelings,—a permanence that enables us to predict, in certain circumstances, the feelings which they are again to excite in our percipient mind; and to the union of all these permanent external causes, in one great system, we give the name of the material world. But the material world, in the sense in which alone we are entitled to speak of it, is still only a name for a multitude of external causes of our feelings; of causes which are recognised by us as permanent and uniform in their nature, but are so recognised by us only because, in similar circumstances, they excite uniformly in the mind the same perceptions, or at least are supposed by us to be uniform in their own nature, when the perceptions which they excite in us are uniform. It is according to their mode of affecting the mind, then, with various sensations that we know them,—and not according to their own absolute nature, which it is impossible for us to know,—whether we give the name of primary or secondary to the qualities which affect us. If our sensations were different, our perceptions of the qualities of things, which induce these sensations in us, would instantly have a corresponding difference. All the external existences which we term matter, and all the phenomena of their motion or their rest, if known to us at all, are known to us only by exciting in us, the percipients of them, certain feelings: and qualities, which are not more or less directly relative to our feelings as sentient or percipient beings, are, therefore,



qualities which we must be for ever incapable even of divining.

This, and some other discussions which have of late engaged us, were in part intended as preparatory to the inquiry on which we entered in the close of my Lecture,—the inquiry into the justness of the praise which has been claimed and received by Dr Reid, as the confuter of a very absurd theory of perception, till then universally prevalent: and if, indeed, the theory which he is said to have confuted, had been the general belief of philosophers till confuted by him, there can be no question that he would have had a just claim to be considered as one of the chief benefactors of the Philosophy of Mind. At any rate, since this glory has been ascribed to him, and his supposed confutation of the theory of perception, by little images of objects conveyed to the mind, has been considered as forming one of the most important eras in intellectual science, it has acquired, from this universality of mistake with respect to it, an interest which, from its own merits, it would certainly be far from possessing.

In the philosophy of the Peripatetics, and in all the dark ages of the scholastic followers of that system, ideas were truly considered as little images derived from objects without: and, as the word idea still continued to be used after this original meaning had been abandoned, (as it continues still in all the works that treat of perception,) it is not wonderful that many of the accustomed forms of expression, which were retained together with it, should have been of a kind that, in their strict etymological meaning, might have seemed to harmonize more with the theory of ideas as images, which prevailed when

these particular forms of expression originally became habitual, than with that of ideas as mere states of the mind itself; since this is only what has happened with respect to innumerable other words, in the transmutations of meaning which they have received during the long progress of scientific inquiry. The idea, in the old philosophy, had been that of which the presence immediately preceded the mental perception,—the direct external cause of perception; and, accordingly, it may well be supposed, that when the direct cause of perception was believed to be not a foreign phantasm but a peculiar affection of the sensorial organ, that word which had formerly been applied to the supposed object would still imply some reference to the organic state, which was believed to supply the place of the shadowy film, or phantasm, in being, what it had been supposed to be, the immediate antecedent of perception. *Idea*, in short, in the old writers, like the synonymous word *perception* at present, was expressive not of one part of a process, but of two parts of it. It included, with a certain vague comprehensiveness, the organic change as well as the mental,—in the same way as perception now implies a certain change produced in our organs of sense, and a consequent change in the state of the mind: and hence it is surely not very astonishing, that while many expressions are found in the works of these old writers, which, in treating of ideas, have a reference to the mental part of the process of perception, other expressions are occasionally employed which relate only to the material part of the process,—since both parts of the process, as I have said, were, to a certain degree, denoted by that single word. All this might very naturally take place, though nothing more were meant to be expressed by it than these two parts of

the process,—the organic change, whatever it might be, and the subsequent mental change,—without the necessary intervention of something distinct from both, such as Dr Reid supposes to have been meant by the term Idea.

It is this application to the bodily part of the process of expressions, which he considered as intended to be applied to the mental part of perception, that has sometimes misled him in the views which he has given of the opinions of former philosophers. But still more frequently has he been misled, by understanding in a literal sense phrases which were intended in a metaphorical sense, and which seem so obviously metaphorical that it is truly difficult to account for the misapprehension. Indeed, the same metaphors, on the mere use of which Dr Reid founds so much, continue still to be used in the same manner as before he wrote. We speak of impressions on the mind—of ideas bright or obscure, permanent or fading—of senses that are the inlets to our knowledge of external things—and of memory in which this knowledge is stored—precisely as the writers and speakers before us used these phrases, without meaning anything more than that certain organic changes, necessary to perception, are produced by external objects, and that certain feelings, similar to those originally excited in this manner, are afterwards renewed, with more or less permanence and vivacity, without the recurrence of the objects that originally produced them;—and to arrange all the moods and figures of logic in confutation of mere metaphors, such as I cannot but think the *images in the mind* to have been which Dr Reid so powerfully assailed, seems an undertaking not very different from that of exposing, syllogistically and seriously, all the follies of Grecian paganism as a system of theological



belief, in the hope of converting some unfortunate poetaster or poet, who still talks, in his rhymings to his mistress, of Cupid and the Graces.

There is, however, one very important practical inference to be drawn from this misapprehension—the necessity of avoiding, as much as possible, in philosophic disquisition, the language of metaphor, especially when the precise meaning has not before been pointed out, so as to render any misconception of the intended meaning, when a metaphor is used, as nearly impossible as the condition of our intellectual nature will allow. In calculating the possibility of this future misconception, we should never estimate our own perspicuity very highly: for there is always in man a redundant facility of mistake, beyond our most liberal allowance. As has been truly said,—

“The difference is as great between  
The optics seeing, as the objects seen :”<sup>1</sup>

and, unfortunately, it is the object only which is in our power. The fallible optics that are to view it, are beyond our control: and whatever opinion, therefore, the most cautious philosopher may assert, he ought never to flatter himself with the absolute certainty that, in the course of a few years, he may not be exhibited and confuted, as the assertor of a doctrine not merely different from that which he has professed, but exactly opposite to it.

The true nature of the opinions really held by philosophers is, however, to be determined by reference to their works. To this, then, let us proceed.

The language of Mr Locke,—to begin with one of the most eminent of these,—is unfortunately so very

<sup>1</sup> Pope.

figurative, when he speaks of the intellectual phenomena, (though I have no doubt that he would have avoided these figures if he could have foreseen the possibility of their being interpreted literally,) that it is not easy to show, by any single quotation, how very different his opinions as to perception were, from those which Dr Reid has represented them to be. The great question is, whether he believed the existence of ideas as things in the mind, separate from perception, and intermediate between the organic affection, whatever it might be, and the mental affection; or whether the idea and the perception were considered by him as the same. "In the perception of external objects," says Dr Reid, "all languages distinguish three things: the mind that perceives—the operation of that mind, which is called perception,—and the object perceived. Philosophers have introduced a fourth thing in this process, which they call the idea of the object."<sup>1</sup> It is the merit of showing the nullity of this supposed fourth thing which Dr Reid claims, and which has been granted to him without examination. The perception itself, as a state of the mind, or, as he chooses to call it, an operation of the mind, he admits, and he admits also the organic change which precedes it. Did Mr Locke then contend for anything more, for that fourth thing, the idea, distinct from the perception,—over which Dr Reid supposes himself to have triumphed? That he did *not* contend for anything more, nor conceive the *idea* to be anything different from the *perception itself*, is sufficiently apparent from innumerable passages both of his Essay itself, and of his admirable defence of the great doctrines of his Essay, in his controversy with Bishop Stillingfleet. He repeatedly states, that he uses the word *idea* as synonymous with

<sup>1</sup> On the Intellectual Powers, Essay II. c. xii.

conception or notion, in the common use of those terms: his only reason for preferring it to notion, (which assuredly Dr Reid could not suppose to mean anything distinct from the mind,) being, that the term *notion* seems to him better limited to a particular class of ideas—those which he technically terms mixed modes. That ideas are not different from perceptions is clearly expressed by him. “To ask at what time a man has first any ideas,” he says, “is to ask when he begins to perceive; having ideas and perception being the same thing.”<sup>1</sup> If he speaks of our senses as the inlets to our ideas, the metaphor is surely a very obvious one; or, if any one will still contend, that what is said metaphorically must have been intended really, it must be remembered, that he uses precisely the same metaphor in cases in which the real application of it is absolutely impossible; as, for example, with respect to our perceptions or sensations; and that, if we are to understand, from his use of such metaphors, that he believed the ideas thus introduced, to be distinct from the mind, we must understand, in like manner, that he believed our sensations and perceptions introduced in like manner, to be also things self-existing, and capable of being admitted, at certain inlets, into the mind as their recipient. “Our senses, conversant about particular sensible objects, do convey,” he says, “into the mind, several distinct perceptions of things, according to those various ways wherein those objects do affect them.”<sup>2</sup> “The senses are avenues provided by nature for the reception of sensations.”<sup>3</sup> I cannot but think that these, and the similar passages that occur in the Essay, ought, of themselves, to have convinced Dr Reid, that he who thus spoke of *perceptions* conveyed

<sup>1</sup> Essay concerning Human Understanding, B. II. chap. i. sect. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Sect. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Sect. 12.



into the mind, and of avenues provided for the reception of *sensations*, might also, when he spoke of the conveyance of ideas into the mind, and of avenues for the reception of ideas, have meant nothing more than the simple external origin of those notions, or conceptions, or feelings, or affections of mind, to which he gave the name of ideas; especially when there is not a single argument in his Essay, or in any of his works, that is founded on the substantial reality of our ideas, as separate and distinct things in the mind. I shall refer only to one additional passage, which I purposely select, because it is, at the same time, very full of the particular figures that have misled Dr Reid, and shows, therefore, what the true meaning of the author was, at the time at which he used these figures.

“The other way of retention, is the power to revive again in our minds those ideas which, after imprinting, have disappeared, or have been, as it were, laid aside out of sight; and thus we do, when we conceive heat or light, yellow or sweet, the object being removed. This is memory, which is, as it were, the store-house of our ideas. For, the narrow mind of man not being capable of having many ideas under view and consideration at once, it was necessary to have a repository to lay up those ideas, which at another time it might have use of. But our ideas being nothing but actual perceptions in the mind, which cease to be anything when there is no perception of them, this laying up of our ideas in the repository of the memory signifies no more but this—that the mind has a power in many cases to revive perceptions which it has once had, with this additional perception annexed to them, that it has had them before. And in this sense it is, that our ideas are said to be in our

memories, when indeed they are actually nowhere, but only there is an ability in the mind, when it will, to revive them again, and, as it were, paint them anew in itself, though some with more, some with less difficulty; some more lively, and others more obscurely."<sup>1</sup>

The doctrine of this truly eminent philosopher, therefore, is, that the presence of the external object, and the consequent organic change, are followed by an idea, "which is nothing but the actual perception;" and that the laying up of these ideas in the memory signifies nothing more, than that the mind has, in many cases, "a power to revive perceptions which it has once had." All this, I conceive, is the very doctrine of Dr Reid on the subject; and to have confuted Mr Locke, therefore, if it had been possible for him, must have been a very unfortunate confutation, as it would have been also to have confuted as completely the very opinions on the subject which he was disposed himself to maintain.

I may now proceed further back, to another philosopher of great eminence, whose name, unfortunately for its reputation, is associated more with his political and religious errors, than with his analytical investigations of the nature of the phenomena of thought. The author to whom I allude is Hobbes, without all question one of the most acute intellectual inquirers of the country and age in which he lived. As the physiology of the mind, in Britain at least, seemed at that time to be almost a new science, he was very generally complimented by his contemporary poets, as the discoverer of a *new land*. Some very beautiful Latin verses, addressed to him, I quoted to you in a former Lecture, in which it was said, on occasion of

<sup>1</sup> Essay concerning Human Understanding, B. II. chap. x. sect. 2.

his work on Human Nature, that the mind, which had before known all things, was now, for the first time, made known to itself,—

“*Omnia hactenus  
Quæ nosse potuit, nota jam primum est sibi;*”

and in which he was said, in revealing the mind, to have performed a work, next in divinity to that of creating it;

“*Divinum est opus  
Animum creare, proximum huic ostendere.*”

By Cowley, who styles him “the discoverer of the golden lands of new philosophy,” he is compared to Columbus, with this difference, that the world, which that great navigator found, was left by him rude and neglected, to the culture of future industry; while that which Hobbes discovered might be said to have been at once explored by him and civilized. The eloquence of his strong and perspicuous style, I may remark by the way, seems to have met with equal commendation from his poetical panegyrists, with whom, certainly not from the excellence of his own verses, he appears to have been in singular favour. His style is thus described, in some verses of Sheffield duke of Buckingham :

“Clear as a beautiful transparent skin,  
Which never hides the blood, yet holds it in ;  
Like a delicious stream it ever ran,  
As smooth as woman, but as strong as man.”<sup>1</sup>

The opinions of Hobbes, on the subject which we are considering, are stated at length in that part of

<sup>1</sup> On Hobbes and his Writings, v. 37-40. Works, p. 180, 4to edition.



his Elements of Philosophy which he has entitled *Physica*; and, far from justifying Dr Reid's assertion, with respect to the general ideal system of philosophers, may be considered in this important respect, as far at least as relates to the unity of the idea and the perception itself, as similar to his own. Sensation or perception he traces to the impulse of external objects producing a motion along the nerves towards the brain, and a consequent reaction outwards, which he seems to think, very falsely indeed, may account for the reference to the object as external. This hypothesis, however, is of no consequence. The only important point, in reference to the supposed universality of the system of ideas, is whether this philosopher of another age asserted the existence of ideas as intermediate things, distinct from the mere perception: and on this subject he is as explicit as Dr Reid himself could be. The idea, or *phantasma*, as he terms it, is the very perception or *actus sentiendi*. "*Phantasma enim est sentiendi actus; neque differt a sensatione aliter quam fieri differt a factum esse.*"<sup>1</sup> The same doctrine, and I may add also, the same expression of the unity of the *actus sentiendi* and the *phantasma*, are to be found in various other parts of his works.

I may, however, proceed still further back, to an author of yet wider and more varied genius; one of those extraordinary men whom Nature gives to the world for her mightiest purposes, when she wishes to change the aspect, not of a single science merely, but of all that can be known by man; that illustrious rebel, who, in overthrowing the authority of Aristotle, seemed to have acquired, as it were by right of conquest, a sway in philosophy as absolute, though not

<sup>1</sup> *Elementa Philosophiæ*, Pars IV. c. xxv. sect. 3.

so lasting, as that of the Grecian despot. "Time," says one of the most eloquent of his countrymen, "has destroyed the opinions of Des Cartes. But his glory subsists still. He appears like one of those dethroned monarchs, who, on the very ruins of their empire, still seem born for the sovereignty of mankind."<sup>1</sup>

On the opinions of Des Cartes, with respect to perception, Dr Reid has dwelt at great length; and has not merely represented him as joining in that belief of ideas, distinct from perception, which he represents as the universal belief of philosophers, but has even expressed astonishment that Des Cartes, whose general opinions might have led him to a different conclusion, should yet have joined in the common one. "The system of Des Cartes," he says, "is with great perspicuity and acuteness explained by himself, in his writings, which ought to be consulted by those who would understand it."<sup>2</sup> He probably was not aware, when he wrote these few lines, how important was the reference which he made, especially to those whom he was addressing; since the more they studied the view which he has given of the opinions of Des Cartes, the more necessary would it become for them to consult the original author.

"It is to be observed," he says, "that Des Cartes rejected a part only of the ancient theory concerning the perception of external objects by the senses, and that he adopted the other part. That theory may be divided into two parts: the first, that images, species, or forms of external objects, come from the object, and enter by the avenues of the senses to the mind; the second part is, that the external object itself is not perceived, but only the species or image of it in the

<sup>1</sup> Thomas.    <sup>2</sup> On the Intellectual Powers, Essay II. c. viii.

mind. The first part Des Cartes and his followers rejected, and refuted by solid arguments; but the second part, neither he nor his followers have thought of calling in question; being persuaded that it is only a representative image, in the mind, of the external object that we perceive, and not the object itself. And this image, which the Peripatetics called a species, he calls an idea, changing the name only, while he admits the thing."<sup>1</sup>—"Des Cartes, according to the spirit of his own philosophy, ought to have doubted of both parts of the Peripatetic hypothesis, or to have given his reasons why he adopted one part, as well as why he rejected the other part; especially since the unlearned, who have the faculty of perceiving objects by their senses, in no less perfection than philosophers, and should therefore know, as well as they, what it is they perceive, have been unanimous in this, that the objects they perceive are not ideas in their own minds, but things external. It might have been expected that a philosopher, who was so cautious as not to take his own existence for granted, without proof, would not have taken it for granted, without proof, that everything he perceived was only ideas in his own mind."<sup>2</sup>

All this might certainly have been expected, as Dr Reid says, if the truth had not been, that the opinions of Des Cartes are precisely opposite to the representation which he has given of them; that, far from believing in the existence of images of external objects, as the immediate causes or antecedents of perception, he strenuously contends against them. The presence of the external body,—the organic change, which he conceives to be a sort of motion of the small fibrils of

<sup>1</sup> On the Intellectual Powers, Essay II. c. viii.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.



the nerves and brain,—and the affection of the mind, which he expressly asserts to have no resemblance whatever to the motion that gave occasion to it,—these are all which he conceives to constitute the process of perception, without any idea, as a thing distinct,—a fourth thing intervening between the organic and the mental change. And this process is exactly the process which Dr Reid himself supposes, with this only difference—an unimportant one for the present argument—that Dr Reid, though he admits *some* intervening organic change, does not state, positively, what he conceives to be its nature, while the French philosopher supposes it to consist in a motion of the nervous fibrils. The doctrine of Des Cartes is to be found, very fully stated, in his *Principia Philosophiæ*, in his *Dioptrics*, and in many passages of his small controversial works. He not merely rejects the Peripatetic notion of images or shadowy films, the resemblances of external things, received by the senses,—contending that the mere organic affection—the motion of the nervous fibrils—is sufficient, without any such images, “*diversos motus tenuium uniuersusque nervi capillamentorum sufficere ad diversos sensus producendum;*” and proving this by a very apposite case, to which he frequently recurs, of a blind man determining the dimensions of bodies by comprehending them within two crossed sticks,—in which case, he says, it cannot be supposed that the sticks transmit, through themselves, any images of the body; but he even proceeds to account for the common prejudice, with respect to the use of images in perception, ascribing it to the well-known effect of pictures in exciting notions of the objects pictured. “Such is the nature of the mind,” he says, “that, by its very constitution, when certain bodily motions take place,

certain thoughts immediately arise, that have no resemblance whatever, as images, to the motions in consequence of which they arise. The thoughts which words, written or spoken, excite, have surely no resemblance to the words themselves. A slight change in the motion of a pen may produce, in the reader, affections of mind the most opposite; nor is it any reply to this to say, that the characters traced by the pen are only occasions that excite the mind itself to form opposite images: for the case is equally striking when no such image can be formed, and the feeling is the immediate result of the application of the external body. When a sword has pierced any part, is not the feeling excited as different altogether from the mere motion of the sword, as colour, or sound, or smell, or taste? and since we are sure, in the case of the mere pain from the sword, that no image of the sword is necessary, ought we not to extend the same inference, by analogy, to all the other affections of our senses, and to believe these also to depend, not on any images, or things transmitted to the brain, but on the mere constitution of our nature, by which certain thoughts are made to arise in consequence of certain corporeal motions?" The passage is long, indeed; but it is so clear, and so decisive, as to the misrepresentation by Dr Reid of the opinion which he strangely considered himself as confuting, that I cannot refrain from quoting the original, that you may judge for yourselves of the real meaning, which a translation might be supposed to have erred in conveying.

"*Probatur deinde, talem esse nostræ mentis naturam, ut ex eo solo quod quidam motus in corpore fiant ad quashbet cogitationes, nullam istorum motuum imaginem referentes, possit impelli; et speciatim ad illas confusas, quæ sensus, sive sensationes dicuntur. Nam*

videmus, verba, sive ore prolata sive tantum scripta, quaslibet in animis nostris cogitationes et commotiones excitare. In eadem charta, cum eodem calamo et atramento, si tantum calami extremitas certo modo supra chartam ducatur, literas exarabit, quæ cogitationes præliorum, tempestatum, furiarum, affectusque indignationis et tristitiæ in lectorum animis concitabunt; si vero alio modo fere simili calamus moveatur, cogitationes valde diversas, tranquillitatis, pacis, amœnitatis, affectusque plane contrarios amoris et lætitiæ efficiet. Respondebitur fortasse, scripturam vel loquelam nullos affectus, nullasque rerum a se diversarum imaginationes immediate in mente excitare, sed tantummodo diversas intellectiones; quarum deinde occasione anima ipsa variarum rerum imagines in se efformat. Quid autem dicetur de sensu doloris et titillationis? Gladius corpori nostro admovetur; illud scindit; ex hoc solo sequitur dolor; qui sane non minus diversus est à gladii, vel corporis quod scinditur, locali motu, quam color, vel sonus, vel odor, vel sapor. Atque ideo cum clare videamus, doloris sensum in nobis excitari ab eo solo, quod aliquæ corporis nostri partes contactû alicujus alterius corporis localiter moveantur, concludere licet, mentem nostram esse talis naturæ, ut, ab aliquibus etiam motibus localibus, omnium aliorum sensuum affectiones pati possit.

“Præterea non deprehendimus ullam differentiam inter nervos, ex qua liceat judicare, aliud quid per unos, quam alios, ab organis sensuum externorum ad cerebrum pervenire, vel omnino quidquam eo pervenire præter ipsorum nervorum motum localem.”<sup>1</sup>

It is scarcely possible to express more strongly, or illustrate more clearly, an opinion so exactly the re-

<sup>1</sup> Principia Philosophiæ, Pars IV. sect. 198, pp. 190, 191. Amst. 1664.



verse of that doctrine of perception, by the medium of representative ideas or images, ascribed by Dr Reid to its illustrious author. It would not be more unjust, even after all his laborious writings on the subject, to rank the supposed confuter of the ideal system, as himself one of its most strenuous champions, than to make this charge against Des Cartes, and to say of him, in Dr Reid's words, that "the image which the Peripatetics called a species, he calls an idea, changing the name only, while he admits the thing."<sup>1</sup>

To these authors, whose opinions on the subject of perception Dr Reid has misconceived, I may add one whom even he himself allows to have shaken off the ideal system, and to have considered the idea and the perception as not distinct, but the same, a modification of the mind, and nothing more. I allude to the celebrated Jansenist writer, Arnould, who maintains this doctrine as expressly as Dr Reid himself, and makes it the foundation of his argument in his controversy with Mallebranche. But, if I were to quote to you every less important writer, who disbelieved the reality of ideas or images, as things existing separately and independently, I might quote to you almost every writer, British and foreign, who, for the last century, and for many years preceding it, has treated of the mind. The narrow limits of a Lecture have forced me to confine my notice to the most illustrious.

Of all evidence, however, with respect to the prevalence of opinions, the most decisive is that which is found, not in treatises read only by a few, but in the popular elementary works of science of the time, the general text-books of schools and colleges. I shall conclude this long discussion, therefore, with short

<sup>1</sup> On the Intellectual Powers, Essay II. c. viii.

quotations from two of the most distinguished and popular authors, of this very useful class.

The first is from the logic, or rather the pneumatology, of Le Clerc, the friend of Locke. In his chapter on the nature of ideas, he gives the history of the opinions of philosophers on this subject, and states among them the very doctrine which is most forcibly and accurately opposed to the ideal system of perception. "Others," he says, "hold that ideas and the perceptions of ideas are absolutely the same in themselves, and differ merely in our relative applications of them: that same feeling of the mind, which is termed an idea, in reference to the object which the mind considers, is termed a perception, when we speak of it relatively to the percipient mind; but it is only of one modification of the mind that we speak, in both cases." According to these philosophers, therefore, there are, in strictness of language, no ideas distinct from the mind itself. "*Alii putant ideas et perceptiones idearum easdem esse, licet relationibus differant. Idea, uti censent, propriè ad objectum refertur, quod mens considerat;—perceptio, verò, ad mentem ipsam quæ percipit; sed duplex illa relatio ad unam modificationem mentis pertinet. Itaque secundùm hosce philosophus, nullæ sunt, propriè loquendo, idæ à mente nostra distinctæ.*"<sup>1</sup> What is it, I may ask, which Dr Reid could consider himself as having added to this very philosophic view of perception? and, if he added nothing, it is surely too much to ascribe to him the merit of detecting errors, the counter statement to which had long formed a part of the elementary works of the schools.

In addition to these quotations,—the number of which may perhaps already have produced at least as

<sup>1</sup> Clerici Pneumatologia, sect. i. cap. v. subsect. 10.

much weariness as conviction,—I shall content myself with a single paragraph, from a work of De Crousaz, the author, not of one merely, but of many very popular elementary works of logic, and unquestionably one of the most acute thinkers of his time. His works abound with many sagacious remarks on the sources of the prejudice involved in that ideal system which Dr Reid conceived himself the first to have overthrown; and he states, in the strongest language, that our ideas are nothing more than states or affections of our mind itself. “*Cogitandi modi—quibus cogitatio nostra modificatur, quos induit alios post alios, sufficient, ut per eos ad rerum cognitionem veniat; nec sunt fingendæ ideæ, ab illis modificationibus diversæ.*”<sup>1</sup> I may remark, by the way, that precisely the same distinction of sensations and perceptions, on which Dr Reid founds so much, is stated and enforced in the different works of this ingenious writer. Indeed so very similar are his opinions, that if he had lived after Dr Reid, and had intended to give a view of that very system of perception which we have been examining, I do not think that he could have varied in the slightest respect from that view of the process which he has given in his own original writings.

It appears, then, that so far is Dr Reid from having the merit of confuting the universal, or even general illusion of philosophers, with respect to ideas in the mind, as images or separate things, distinct from the perception itself, that his own opinions as to perception, on this point at least, are precisely the same as those which generally prevailed before. From the time of the decay of the Peripatetic Philosophy, the process of per-

<sup>1</sup> *Tentamen Novum Metaphysicum*, sect. xxxvii. Groningæ, 1725.



ception was generally considered as involving nothing more than the presence of an external object, an organic change or series of changes, and an affection of the mind immediately subsequent, without the intervention of any idea as a fourth separate thing between the organic and the mental affection. I have no doubt that, with the exception of Berkeley and Mallebranche, who had peculiar and very erroneous notions on the subject, all the philosophers whom Dr Reid considered himself as opposing, would, if they had been questioned by him, have admitted, before they heard a single argument on his part, that their opinions, with respect to ideas, were precisely the same as his own: and what then would have remained for him to confute? He might, indeed, still have said that it was absurd, in those who considered perception as a mere state or modification of the mind, to speak of ideas in their mind: but the very language used by him for this purpose, would probably have contained some metaphor as little philosophic. We must still allow men to speak of ideas in their mind, if they will only consent to believe that the ideas are truly the mind itself variously affected; as we must still allow men to talk of the rising and setting of the sun, if they will only admit that the motion which produces those appearances is not in that majestic and tranquil orb, but in our little globe of earth, which, carrying along with it, in its daily revolution, all our busy wisdom, and still busier folly, is itself as restless as its restless inhabitants.

That a mind so vigorous as that of Dr Reid, should have been capable of the series of misconceptions which we have traced, may seem wonderful, and truly is so; and equally, or rather still more wonderful, is the general admission of his merits in this respect. I

trust it will impress you with one important lesson, which could not be taught more forcibly than by the errors of so great a mind: that it will always be necessary for you to consult the opinions of authors,—when their opinions are of sufficient importance to deserve to be accurately studied,—in their own works, and not in the works of those who profess to give a faithful account of them. From my own experience, I can most truly assure you, that there is scarcely an instance in which, on examining the works of those authors whom it is the custom more to cite than to read, I have found the view which I had received of them to be faithful. There is usually something more or something less, which modifies the general result; some mere conjecture represented as an absolute affirmation, or some limited affirmation extended to analogous cases, which it was not meant to comprehend. And, by the various additions or subtractions thus made, in passing from mind to mind, so much of the spirit of the original doctrine is lost, that it may, in some cases, be considered as having made a fortunate escape, if it be not at last represented as directly opposite to what it is. It is like those engraved portraits of the eminent men of former ages, the copies of mere copies, from which every new artist, in the succession, has taken something, or to which he has added something, till not a lineament remains the same. If we are truly desirous of a faithful likeness, we must have recourse once more to the original painting.

## LECTURE XXVIII.

*On Dr Reid's supposed proof of a Material World—on Vision—  
and Analysis of the Feelings ascribed to it.*

IN my Lecture of yesterday, Gentlemen, we were engaged in considering the grounds of Dr Reid's claim to the honour of detecting and exposing the fallacy of the hypothesis of ideas, as images, or things, in the mind, distinct from the mind itself; a claim which, though made by one who has many other indubitable titles to our respect and gratitude, we found, in this particular instance, to be inadmissible.

It appeared, on an examination of the original works of the eminent philosophers who preceded him for more than a century, and even of the common elementary treatises of the schools, that though, after the Peripatetic hypothesis of species had been universally or generally abandoned, the language of that hypothesis continued to subsist metaphorically,—as it continues with equal force at this moment,—it was only metaphorically that it did thus continue; and that, when Dr Reid, therefore, conceived,—in proving ideas not to be self-existing things, separate and distinct from the percipient mind itself,—that he was confuting what everybody believed, he merely assumed as real what was intended as metaphorical, and overthrew opinions which the authors, to whom he ascribes them, would themselves have been equally eager to overthrow. But there is yet another point, connected with the theory of perception, on which he is believed to have made an important addition to our metaphysical knowledge. I allude to his supposed proof of the existence of a material world. In this, too;



we shall find, that he has truly added nothing to our former knowledge; that he has left us, in short, our belief as originally felt by us, but has not supplied us with the slightest evidence in addition to the force of that original belief itself, nor given any additional strength to that very belief, which before was confessedly irresistible.

The confutation of the scepticism on this subject, it is evident, may be attempted in two ways; by showing the arguments urged by the sceptic to be logically false, or by opposing to them the belief itself, as of evidence either directly intuitive, or the result, at least, of other intuitions, and early and universal associations and inferences, so irresistible after the first acquisitions of infancy, as to have then all the force of intuition itself. As long as Dr Reid confines himself to the latter of these plans, he proceeds on safe ground; but his footing is not so firm when he assails the mere logic of the sceptic: for the sceptical argument, as a mere play of reasoning, admits of no reply. It is vain for him to say, that the scepticism proceeding, as he thinks, on the belief of ideas in the mind, as the direct objects of perception, must fall with these ideas: for, though the scepticism may be consistent with the belief of ideas as separate existences in the mind, it does not depend, in the slightest degree, on their existence or non-existence. We have only to change the term *ideas* into the synonymous phrase *affections or states of the mind*; and the scepticism, if not stronger, is at least in strength exactly what it was before. In the case the sceptic will say, that we are sensible only, not of external objects, which may have influence to our ideas; in the other case, that is but a state of the mind as much as any feelings, and that we are conscious only

of this, and other states or affections of our mind, which have variously succeeded each other, and not of external objects, which themselves can be no parts of that train of mental consciousness. Whatever weight there may be in the former of these sceptical theories, exists, I may say, even with greater force, because with greater simplicity, in the second; and the task, therefore, of proving by logic, if logical proof were requisite for our belief, the existence of a material world, would remain as laborious as before, after the fullest confutation of the systems which might suppose perception to be carried on by the medium of little images of bodies in the mind.

So far, indeed, would the confutation of this hypothesis as to perception, even if Dr Reid had truly overthrown it, be from lessening the force of the scepticism as to the existence of matter, that, of two sceptics, one believing everything with respect to ideas which Dr Reid supposed himself to have confuted, and the other believing ideas to be mere states of his mind, there can be no question that the former would be the more easy to be overcome, since his belief would already involve the existence of *something* separate from the mind; while the other might maintain, that all of which he was conscious, was the mere series of affections of his own mind, and that beyond this consciousness he could know nothing.

Against the argument of one who founds his very argument on his consciousness merely, and professes to have no knowledge either of little images or of anything else beyond his consciousness, it would be as idle to urge, that ideas are not little images in the mind, as it would have been for a Cartesian to attempt to confute the Newtonian system of attraction, by a denial of the Ptolemaic spheres.

All that remains, then, to supply the place of logical demonstration, which would be needless where the belief is as strong as that of demonstration itself, is the paramount force of this universal and irresistible belief: and there is no fear that this can be weakened by any argument, or be less felt by him who denies it than by him who asserts it. We are conscious, indeed, only of the feelings that are the momentary states of our own mind: but some of these it is absolutely impossible for us not to ascribe to causes that are external, and independent of us; and the belief of a system of external things is one of these very states of the mind which itself forms, and will ever form, a part of the train of our consciousness. This Mr Hume himself, the great sceptic whom Dr Reid opposes, admits as readily as Dr Reid himself:—"A Copernican or Ptolemaic, who supports each his different system of astronomy, may hope to produce a conviction which will remain constant and durable with his audience. A Stoic or Epicurean displays principles which may not only be durable, but which have an effect on conduct and behaviour. But a Pyrrhonian cannot expect that his philosophy will have any constant influence on the mind; or, if it had, that its influence would be beneficial to society. On the contrary, he must acknowledge, if he will acknowledge anything, that all human life must perish were his principles universally and steadily to prevail. All discourse, all action would immediately cease; and men remain in a total lethargy, till the necessities of nature, unsatisfied, put an end to their miserable existence. It is true, so fatal an event is very little to be dreaded. Nature is always too strong for principle; and, though a Pyrrhonian may throw himself, or others, into a momentary amazement and confusion by



his profound reasonings, the first and most trivial event in life will put to flight all his doubts and scruples, and leave him the same, in every point of action and speculation, with the philosophers of every other sect, or with those who never concerned themselves in any philosophical researches. When he awakes from his dream, he will be the first to join in the laugh against himself."<sup>1</sup> In what respect does this differ from the language of Dr Reid himself, when he says that "the belief of a material world is older, and of more authority, than any principles of philosophy. It declines the tribunal of reason, and laughs at all the artillery of the logician."<sup>2</sup> Surely, if it decline the tribunal of reason, it is not by reasoning that it is to be supported, even though the reasoner should have the great talents which Dr Reid unquestionably possessed.

The sceptic and the orthodox philosopher of Dr Reid's school thus come precisely to the same conclusion. The creed of each, on this point, is composed of two propositions, and of the same two propositions; the first of which is, that the existence of a system of things, such as we understand when we speak of an external world, cannot be proved by argument; and the second, that the belief of it is of a force which is paramount to that of argument, and absolutely irresistible. The difference, and the only difference is, that, in asserting the same two propositions, the sceptic pronounces the first in a loud tone of voice, and the second in a whisper, while his supposed antagonist passes rapidly over the first, and dwells on the second with a tone of confidence. The negation in

<sup>1</sup> Essays—Inquiry concerning Human Understanding, sect. xii. Part 2.

<sup>2</sup> Inquiry into the Human Mind, &c., chap. v. sect. 7.

the one case, and the affirmation in the other case are, however, precisely the same in both. To him, indeed, who considers the tone only and not the meaning, there may seem to be a real strife of sentiment; but, if we neglect the tone, which is of no consequence, and attend to the meaning only of what is affirmed and denied by both, we shall not be able to discover even the slightest discrepancy. There is no argument of mere reasoning that can prove the existence of an external world: it is absolutely impossible for us not to believe in the existence of an external world. We may call these two propositions, then, a summary of the doctrine of Reid or of the doctrine of Hume, as we please: for it is truly the common and equal doctrine of the two.

Though we have thus seen reason to deny to Dr Reid the merit commonly ascribed to him on the points which we have been considering relative to the theory of perception, I trust you will not, on that account, be insensible to the merits which he truly possessed. He knows little, indeed, of the human mind, who does not know how compatible many errors and misconceptions are with the brightest and most active energies of intellect. On this "isthmus of a middle state," of which Pope speaks, man, though not "reasoning but to err," is yet subject to occasional error even in his proudest reasonings. With all his wisdom, he is still but "darkly wise;" and, with all the grandeur of his being, but "rudely great."

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*Vision.*

Our inquiry into the nature of the sensations of touch,—or at least of those sensations which are truly, and of others which are commonly, though I think

falsely, ascribed to this organ,—has led us into speculations, in the course of which I have been obliged to anticipate many remarks that more peculiarly belong to the sense which still remains to be considered by us—the sense of sight, that to which we owe so much of our most valuable information with respect to nature, and so many of those pleasures which the bounty of Him who has formed us to be happy as well as to be wise, has so graciously intermingled with all the primary means of our instruction.

The anticipations into which I have been led were necessary for throwing light on the subjects before considered, particularly on the complex feelings ascribed to touch; the knowledge of which feelings, however, was still more necessary for understanding fully the complex perceptions of this sense. It is thus scarcely possible, in science, to treat of one subject without considering it in relation to some other subject, and often to subjects between which, on first view, it would be difficult to trace any relation. Everything throws light upon everything; though the reflection, which is, in many cases, so bright as to force itself upon common eyes, may, in other cases, be so faint as to be perceptible only to eyes of the nicest discernment. It may almost be said that there is an universal affinity in truths,—like that universal attraction which unites to each other, as one common system, the whole masses which are scattered through the infinity of space, and by which, as I have before remarked, the annihilation of a single particle of matter in any one of these orbs, however inconceivably slight its elementary modification might be of the general sum of attraction, would, in that very instant, be productive of change throughout the universe. It is not easy to say what any one science would have been if



any other science had not existed. How different did astronomy become, in consequence of the accidental burning of a few sea-weeds upon the sand, to which the origin of glass has been ascribed; and, when we think of the universal accessions which navigation has made to every department of knowledge, what infinity of truths may be considered as almost starting into existence at the moment when the polarity of the magnet was first observed!

"True to the pole, by thee the pilot guides  
His steady helm, amid the struggling tides,  
Braves with broad sail the unmeasurable sea,  
Cleaves the dark air, and asks no star but thee." <sup>1</sup>

The anticipations which have been made in the present instance will be of advantage in abridging much of the labour which would have been necessary in treating of vision simply. I may now safely leave you to make for yourselves, the application of many arguments on which I have dwelt at length, in treating of the other senses.

The organ of sight, as you well know, is the eye,—a machine of such exquisite and obvious adaptation to the effects produced by it, as to be, of itself, in demonstrating the existence of the Divine being who contrived it, equal in force to many volumes of theology. The atheist, who has seen and studied its internal structure, and yet continues an atheist, may be fairly considered as beyond the power of mere argument to reclaim. The minute details of its structure, however, belong to the anatomist. It is enough for our purpose to know, that, by an apparatus of great simplicity, all the light, which, from every quarter, strikes on the pellucid part of the ball of the eye,—

<sup>1</sup> Darwin's Botanic Garden, canto ii. v. 203-6.

and which, if it continued to pass in the same direction, would thus produce one mingled and indistinct expanse of colour,—is so refracted, as it is termed, or bent from its former direction, to certain focal points, as to be distributed again on the retina, in distinct portions, agreeing with the portions which come from each separate object, so exactly, as to form on it a miniature landscape of the scenery without. Nor is this all. That we may vary, at our pleasure, the field of this landscape, the ball of the eye is furnished with certain muscles, which enable us to direct it more particularly toward the objects which we wish to view; and, according as the light which falls from these may be more or less intense, there are parts which minister to the sensibility of the eye, by increasing or diminishing in proportion the transparent aperture at which the light is admitted. There are, then, in this truly wonderful and beautiful process, in the first place, as determining what objects, in the wide scene around us, are to be visible at the moment, the contraction of certain muscles, on which the particular field of our vision depends, and which may almost be said to enable us to increase the extent of our field of vision, by enabling us to vary it at will; in the second place, the external light, emitted from all the objects within this radiant field, which, on its arrival at the retina, is itself the direct object of vision; in the third place, the provision for increasing or diminishing the diameter of the pupil, in proportion to the quantity of that incident light; in the fourth place, the apparatus by which the dispersed rays of light are made to assume, within the eye, the focal convergence necessary for distinct vision; and lastly, the expansion of the optic nerve, as a part of the great sensorial organ essential to sensation. The difference of the pheno-

mena, produced by the varieties of the external light itself, is exhibited in almost every moment of our waking existence: and the diversities, arising from other parts of the process, are not less striking. There are peculiar diseases which affect the optic nerve, or other parts of the sensorial organ immediately connected with it: there are other diseases which affect the refracting apparatus; others which affect the iris, so as to prevent the enlargement or diminution of the pupil, when different quantities of light are poured on it; others which affect the muscles that vary the position of the ball; and, in all these cases, we find, as might be expected, a corresponding difference of the phenomena.

To open our eyes at present, is not to have a single simple feeling; it is, as it were, to have innumerable feelings. The colour, the magnitude, the figure, the relative position of bodies, are seen by us at once. It is not a small expanse of light which we perceive, equal merely to the surface of the narrow expansion of the optic nerve. It is the universe itself. We are present with stars which beam upon us, at a distance that converts to nothing the whole wide diameter of our planetary system. It is as if the tie which binds us down to the globe on which we dwell belonged only to our other senses, and had no influence over this, which, even in its union with the body, seems still to retain all the power and unbounded freedom of its celestial origin.

It is of importance, however, to remember, that even in the perception of the most distant body, the true object of vision is not the distant body itself, but the light that has reached the expansive termination of the optic nerve; and the sense of vision, therefore, which seems so independent of the tie that binds us



to our small spot of earth, is as truly limited to it as any of our other senses. If the light could exist in the same manner, moving in the same varieties of direction, as at present,—though no other bodies were in existence than the light itself and our sensorial organ,—all the sensations belonging to mere sight would be exactly the same as now: and accordingly we find, as light is, in a great measure, manageable by us, that we have it in our power to vary, at pleasure, the visual notions which any one would otherwise have formed of bodies,—without altering the bodies themselves, or even their position with respect to the eye,—by merely interposing substances to modify the light reflected or emitted from them. The same paper which we term white, when we observe it with our naked eye, seems blue or red when we look at it through glass of such a kind as absorbs all the light which enters it but the rays of those particular colours; and it seems larger or smaller, as we look at it through a concave or convex lens, which leaves the object precisely as it was, and affects only the direction of the rays that come from it:—the reason of all which diversities of perception is, that though what we are accustomed to term the *object* continues the same, whatever substance may be interposed between it and the eye, that which is really the object of vision is different; and our perceptions, therefore, correspond with the diversity of their real objects.

In treating of the distinction which has been made, of those objects of sense which act directly on our organs, and of those which act through a *medium*, as it has been termed, I before remarked to you the confusion into which we might be led by this distinction, which forgets that the supposed medium is itself the

real object as truly as any of the objects, which, in their relations to other senses, are termed direct. In no instance, however, has it led to so much confusion as in the case of vision. It is the more important, therefore, for you to have precise notions on this subject, and to have constantly in mind, that though, indirectly, we may be said to perceive by sight distant objects, as truly as we perceive colour, still the direct object of vision is not the object existing permanently at a distance, but those rays of light, whose existence is independent of the object, and which have received, from the object that reflects them, nothing more than a change of their direction, in consequence of which they have come within the boundary of that small pellucid circle of the eye, which, insignificant as it may seem, comprehends in itself what is truly the whole sphere of our vision.

*Sight*, then, which comprehends all the varieties of colour, is the object, and the only object, of the sense which we are considering. But, simple as it is, of what instruction, and joy, and beauty, and ever-varying magnificence, is it the source !

“Carminē quo Dea te dicam, gratissima cœli  
Progenies, ortumque tuum ; gemmantia rore  
Ut per prata levi lustras, et floribus halans  
Purpureum Veris gremium, scenamque virentem  
Pingis, et umbriferos colles, et cœrula regna ?  
Gratia te, Venerisque lepos, et mille Colorum,  
Formarumque chorus sequitur, motusque decentes.  
At caput invisum Stygiis Nox atra tenebris  
Abdidit, horrendæque simul Formidinis ora,  
Pervigilesque æstus Curarum, atque anxius Angor :  
Undique Lætitia florent mortalia corda,  
Purus et arridet largis fulgoribus Æther.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gray, de Princip. Cogit., lib. i. v. 85-96.

"Hail, holy light, offspring of Heaven, first born !  
 Or of the Eternal, co-eternal beam,  
 May I express thee unblamed ? since God is light,  
 And never but in unapproached light  
 Dwelt from eternity ; dwelt then in Thee,  
 Bright Effluence of bright Essence increate !  
 —Or hear'st thou rather, pure ethereal Stream !  
 Whose fountain who shall tell ? Before the Sun,  
 Before the Heavens, *Thou* wert, and at the voice  
 Of God, as with a mantle didst invest  
 The rising world of waters dark and deep,  
 Won from the void and formless infinite."<sup>1</sup>

How pathetic is the very beauty of this invocation,  
 when we consider the feelings with which it must  
 have been written by him, who,

"Like the wakeful bird,  
 Sung *darkling*,"<sup>2</sup>

and who seems to have looked back on that loveliness  
 of nature, from which he was separated, with the  
 melancholy readiness with which the thoughts of the  
 unfortunate and the sorrowful still revert to past en-  
 joyments ; as the prisoner, even when fettered to his  
 dungeon-floor, still turns his eye, almost involuntarily,  
 to that single gleam of light, which reminds him only  
 of scenes that exist no longer to him.

"Thus with the year  
 Seasons return ;—but *not to me* returns  
 Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn,  
 Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,  
 Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine ;  
 But cloud instead, and ever-during dark  
 Surround me."<sup>3</sup>

How often must he have felt, and how deeply must

<sup>1</sup> Paradise Lost, Book III. v. 1-12.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. v. 38, 39.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, v. 40-46.



such a mind have felt, the force of that complaint which he puts into the mouth of Samson,—a complaint which may surely be forgiven, or almost forgiven, to the blind:—

“Oh why was sight  
To such a tender ball as the eye confined,  
So obvious and so easy to be quench'd;  
And not, as feeling, through all parts diffused,  
That she might look at will through every pore?”<sup>1</sup>

The immediate object of vision, we have seen, then, is light, which gives rise to all the various sensations of colour; and, since the days of Berkeley, philosophers have, with scarcely any exception, admitted, that the knowledge of the distance, magnitude, and real figure of objects, which seems at present to be immediately received by sight, is the result of knowledge acquired by the other senses: though they have, I think without sufficient reason, as universally supposed, that the superficial extension of length and breadth becomes known to us by sight originally; that there is, in short, a visible figure of objects, corresponding with the picture which they form on the retina, and changing, therefore, with their change of position relatively to the eye, and a tangible figure of objects, permanent and independent of their change of place; the latter being the real figure suggested by the former, nearly in the same manner as the conception of objects is suggested, by the arbitrary sounds, or written characters, which denote them. The inquiry, with respect to the truth of this visible figure, as a sensation, may, however, be omitted, till we have considered the former opinion, which respects the visual perception of distance, and of the figure and magnitude which are termed tangible.

<sup>1</sup> Samson Agonistes, v. 93-97.

If it had been duly considered, that it is light which is the true object of vision, and not the luminous body, the question, as far as it depends on reasoning *a priori*, exclusively of any instinctive connexions that might be supposed, could not have admitted of very long discussion. From whatever distance light may come, it is but the point of the long line which terminates at the retina, of which we are sensible; and this terminating point must be the same, whether the ray have come from a few feet of distance, or from many miles. The rays that beam from the adjacent meadow, or the grove, are not nearer to my eye, at the instant of vision, than those which have been reflected from the mountain on the very verge of the horizon, or from the cloud that hangs at an immeasurable distance above my head. The light, that converges on our eye, from all the stars of heaven, within what we term the field of our vision, is collected in a space that cannot be larger than the retina on which it falls. A cube or a sphere is represented to us by the two dimensions of a coloured plane, variously shaded, as truly as by the object itself with its triple dimensions; and in the determination of the exact correspondence of these double and triple dimensions, in all their varieties of relation to the eye, the whole art of perspective consists. A coin of a single inch in diameter, when placed before the eye, and, of course, intercepting only an extent of light equal to the extent of its own surface, is sufficient to hide from us, by actual eclipse, the fields, and villages, and woods, that seemed stretched in almost endless continuity before us.

Unless, therefore, there be some instinctive and immediate suggestion, of certain distances, magnitudes, and figures, by certain varieties of the sensation of colour, there is nothing in the mere light itself, or in

its relation to the eye at the moment of vision, which seems fit to communicate the knowledge of these. Not of distance; for the rays from distant objects, when they produce vision, are as near to the retina as the rays from objects that are contiguous to the eye. Not of real magnitude; for an object, with which we are familiar, appears to us of the same size, at distances, at which everything merely visual is so completely changed, that its magnitude, as far as it depends on mere radiation, may be demonstrated, from the laws of optics, to be equal only to a half, or a tenth part of its apparent magnitude, when nearer. Not of figure; for, without the knowledge of longitudinal distance, we could not distinguish a sphere or a cube from a plane surface of two dimensions; and an object, with the shape of which we are familiar, appears to us of the same form in all directions; though it may be demonstrated, optically, that the visual figure, as far as it depends on mere radiation, must vary with every variety of position.

I have said, that the knowledge of the real magnitude, figure, and position of bodies, could not be obtained immediately from the diversities of the mere surface of light at the retina; unless it were the suggestion of some instinctive principle, by which the one feeling was, originally and inseparably, connected with the other: I have made this exception, to prevent you from being misled by the works on this subject, so as to think, that the original perception of distance implies, in the very notion of it, a physical impossibility. Some diversity there evidently must be of the immediate sensation of sight, or of other feelings co-existing with it, when a difference of magnitude or figure is suggested: the visual affection, which is followed by the notion of a mile, cannot be the same as that which



is attended with the notion of half a foot; nor that which is attended with the perception of a sphere, be the same as that which suggests a plane circular surface. Whatever the number of the varied suggestions of this kind may be, there must be, at least, an equal variety of the immediate sensations that give rise to them; and these corresponding series of sensations and suggestions may originally be associated together by an instinctive principle, as much as any other pairs of phenomena, the connexion of which we ascribe to instinct; or, in other words, suppose an adaptation of them to each other, by the gracious provision of the Power which formed us, for a purpose unforeseen by us, and unwilled at the moment. It is not more wonderful, *a priori*, that a sensation of colour should be immediately followed by a notion of a mile of distance, than that the irritation of the nostril, by any very stimulant odour, should be, immediately and involuntarily, followed by the sudden contraction of a distant muscular organ, like the diaphragm, which produces, in sneezing, the violent expiration necessary for expelling the acrid matter; or that an increase of the quantity of light poured on the eye should be instantly, and without our consciousness, followed by a contraction of the transparent aperture. I am far from saying, that there truly is such an instinctive association of our original visual feelings, with corresponding notions of distance and magnitude, in the present case: for, at least in man, I believe the contrary. I mean only, that the question has, *a priori*, only greater probability on one side, not absolute certainty; and that experience is necessary before we can decide it with perfect confidence.

In the case of the other animals, there seems to be little reason to doubt, that the tedious process, by which

man may be truly said to learn to see, is not necessary for their visual perceptions. The calf, and the lamb, newly dropt into the world, seem to measure forms and distances with their eyes, as distinctly, or at least almost as distinctly, as the human reasoner measures them, after all the acquisitions of his long and helpless infancy. Of these races of our fellow-animals, Nature is at once the Teacher and the great Protectress,—supplying to them, immediately, the powers which are necessary for their preservation,—as, in the long-continued affection of the human parent, she far more than compensates to man the early instincts which she has denied to him. If the other animals had to learn to see, in the same manner with ourselves, it would be scarcely possible that their existence should be preserved to the period at which the acquisitions necessary for accurate perception could be made; even though the hoof had been an instrument of touch and measurement as convenient as the hand. For this difference in the relative circumstances of their situation, the Almighty Being—to whose universal benevolence nothing which he has created is too humble for his care—has made sufficient provision, in giving them that early maturity which makes them, for many months, the superiors of him who is afterwards to rule them with a sway that is scarcely conscious of effort.

“Hale are their young, from human frailties freed,  
Walk unsustained, and, unsupported, feed.  
They live *at once*,—forsake the dam’s warm side,—  
Take the wide world, with nature for their guide,—  
Bound o’er the lawn, or seek the distant glade,—  
And find a home in each delightful shade.”<sup>1</sup>

This instinctive suggestion, which, however subse-

<sup>1</sup> Young’s Paraphrase on a part of the Book of Job, v. 235-240.

quent it may be to the primary visual sensation, seems like immediate perception in the young of other races of animals, is a very strong additional proof, if any such were necessary, that there is no physical impossibility in the supposition, that a similar original suggestion may take place in man. The question, as I before said, becomes truly a question of observation and experiment.

But, in man, there is not that necessity for the instinct, which exists in the peculiar situation of the other animals; and we find, accordingly, that there is no trace of the instinct in him. It is long before the little nursling shows that his eye has distinguished objects from each other, so as to fix their place. We are able almost to trace in his efforts the progress which he is gradually making; and in those striking cases, which are sometimes presented to us, of the acquisition of sight in mature life, in consequence of a surgical operation,—after vision had been obstructed from infancy,—it has been found, that the actual magnitude, and figure, and position of bodies, were to be learned like a new language; that all objects seemed equally close to the eye; and that a sphere and a cube, of each of which the tangible figure was previously known, were not so distinguishable in the mere sensations of vision,—that the one could be said, with certainty, to be the cube, and the other the sphere. In short, what had been supposed, with every appearance of probability, was demonstrated by experiment,—that we learn to see,—and that vision is truly, what Swift has paradoxically defined it to be, the *art of seeing things that are invisible*.



## LECTURE XXIX.

*Analysis of the Feelings ascribed to Vision, continued.*

THE chief part of my last Lecture was employed in considering the Phenomena of Vision, and particularly in proving that vision, simple and immediate as it now seems to us, even in its most magnificent results, is truly the application of an art of long and tedious acquirement; of that art with which we learn to measure forms and distances with a single glance, by availing ourselves of the information previously received from other sources: the mixed product of innumerable observations, and calculations, and detections of former mistakes, which were the philosophy of our infancy, and each of which, separately, has been long forgotten, recurring to the mind, in after-life, with the rapidity of an instinct.

Of all the arts which man can acquire, this is, without question, the richest, both in wonder and in value; so rich in value, that if the race of man had been incapable of acquiring it, the very possibility of their continued existence seems scarcely conceivable; and so rich in subjects of wonder, that to be most familiar with these, and to study them with most attention, is to find at every moment new miracles of nature, worthy of still increasing admiration.

“ Per te quicquid habet mundus, mirabile nobis,  
Panditur; acceptumque tibi decus omne refertur  
Terrarum. Gentes nequicquam interluit æstu  
Vicinas pelagus; tu das superare viarum  
Ardua, et obtutu Sæton conjungis Abydo.  
Nec maris angusti tantum discrimina solers

Decipis, oceanique moras : Tu sidera Cæli  
 Subjicis humanis oculis, et dissita longe  
 Das spectare loca, et Dias invisere sedes.

Nativa hinc quamvis ferimur gravitate deorsum  
 Ad Stygias sedes, Ditisque inamabile regnum,—  
 Mente tamen sursum rapti ad sublimia ; molem  
 Exuimus terrenam, animosque æquamus Olympo.”<sup>1</sup>

On this subject the remarks of Dr Reid, which I am about to quote, are not less just than they are strikingly expressed. “If we shall suppose an order of beings, endued with every human faculty but that of sight, how incredible would it appear to such beings, accustomed only to the slow informations of touch, that, by the addition of an organ, consisting of a ball and socket of an inch diameter, they might be enabled in an instant of time, without changing their place, to perceive the disposition of a whole army, or the order of a battle, the figure of a magnificent palace, or all the variety of a landscape? If a man were by feeling to find out the figure of the peak of Teneriffe, or even of St Peter’s Church at Rome, it would be the work of a lifetime.

“It would appear still more incredible to such beings as we have supposed, if they were informed of the discoveries which may be made by this little organ in things far beyond the reach of any other sense: That by means of it we can find our way in the pathless ocean; that we can traverse the globe of the earth, determine its figure and dimensions, and delineate every region of it: Yea, that we can measure the planetary orbs, and make discoveries in the sphere of the fixed stars.

“Would it not appear still more astonishing to such beings, if they should be further informed, That, by

<sup>1</sup> *Judicium Paridis*, v. 146-158. *Ap. Mus. Anglican.* vol. ii. p. 274, edit. 1741.

means of this same organ, we can perceive the tempers and dispositions, the passions and affections of our fellow-creatures, even when they want most to conceal them? That when the tongue is taught most artfully to lie and dissemble, the hypocrisy should appear in the countenance to a discerning eye; and that, by this organ, we can often perceive what is straight and what is crooked in the mind as well as in the body?—How many mysterious things must a blind man believe, if he will give credit to the relations of those that see! Surely he needs as strong a faith as is required of a good Christian.”<sup>1</sup>

The same observation has been put in a strong light, by the supposition, that it had been as uncommon to be born with the power of sight as it is now to be born incapable of it; in which case it has been truly said, that “the few who had this rare gift would appear as prophets or inspired teachers to the many.”<sup>2</sup> The very easy predictions thus made would be found constantly, or almost constantly, fulfilled, by those who could form no conception of the means by which the effects predicted were foreseen: and wonderful as the dreams and visions of prophetic inspiration may appear, they surely could not seem more wonderful, as a medium of communication, than that by which the very secrets of the mind, and events apparently the most distant, were made known, through the intervention of a small ball like the eye.

In showing the manner by which we learn to combine, with our visual sensations, the knowledge obtained by touch, or, as I am rather inclined to think, for reasons formerly stated, the knowledge falsely ascribed to mere touch, it will not be necessary to go

<sup>1</sup> Inquiry into the Human Mind, &c. c. vi. sect. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. sect. 2.



over the different varieties of figure, magnitude, distance. The most striking of these is distance, which, indeed, may be truly said to involve the other two; since the distance of an object is merely the extension of the long line that intervenes between the object and our eye, and the consequent magnitude of the intervening objects, and that which we consider, regarded as one extended whole. Of this one great whole, what we term the distant object is nothing more than the boundary. The cottage, at the end of the field, is a part of that compound magnitude, of which the field and the cottage are separately parts, exactly in the same manner as the wing of a house is a part of the compound magnitude of the whole building. The line of field which connects our eye with the cottage, may, indeed, be a longer line, but it is a line of precisely the same sort as that which connects the wings of the house with our organ of sight, or with each other.

It is vain to think of ascribing the perception of distance to the measurement of the different angles subtended by objects at different distances, or to an equally nice measurement of the different degrees of inclination of the axes of the eyes, necessary for distinct vision, in particular cases,—as if all men were instinctively geometers, and the peasant and the very idiot were incessantly occupied in measuring angles; for, if this measurement were truly instinctive, it would occur in infancy as in maturity, and be immediate in those who have acquired the power of vision by that surgical operation to which I alluded in my last Lecture. But the most decisive of all considerations, with respect to this supposed geometry, is, that the angles, subtended by the object at its different distances, and the inclination of the optic axes, in the spontaneous accommodation of the eyes to the distinct

vision of the object at different distances, though truly existing, to the mere optical examiner of the object, and the light and the eye, as one compound phenomenon, have no real existence, as feelings of the mind of the individual who sees, and are known but to very few of the immense multitudes, who, without the slightest acquaintance with geometry, or the slightest knowledge of the very lines whose angles they are supposed to measure, are yet able to distinguish the distances of objects as accurately as the most expert mathematician. How is it possible that the angles, which remote objects make relatively to the eye, should be known originally, when the remote objects themselves are not known, but merely the points of light on the retina? In relation to the eye as the organ, and to the mind as originally sentient in vision, these points of light were truly all that existed. The light, indeed, traversed a certain space in passing from the object to the eye, and the lines of direction of the different rays, in arriving at one focal point at the retina, formed truly different angles. But the angles could not be known unless the radiant lines themselves were known; and of these the mind could have no knowledge. During the whole time of their convergence, till they reached the expansion of the optic nerve, the rays of light were as little capable of producing vision as darkness itself; and, when they reached the retina, the lines, and consequently the angles, existed no more. Of whatever use, therefore, such angles may be to the optician in laying down and illustrating the principles of his science, they are of no use in the actual living measurements of sight. Man may reason, indeed,—but he must reason from what he knows; and therefore, if the determination of distance be the result of any judgment, it must be

of a judgment formed from feelings which truly have or have had existence.

Such feelings, the elements of our visual judgments, it is not very difficult to discover.

The great principle, in this case, is the principle of association, by which the notions derived from touch,—or at least the notions which are commonly supposed to be derived from that sense, are suggested immediately by the visual feelings which co-existed with the sensations of touch; in the same manner as the words of a language, when a language has been fully learned, suggest whatever the words may have been used to denote. A child, whose eye has already learned to distinguish objects, hears the word *cup* frequently repeated when a cup is held before him; and the word afterwards suggests the thing. This process every one understands. But we are not equally aware, that, in the prior stage of learning to distinguish the cup by the eye, the child went through a process exactly similar,—that the visual feeling, which the rays of light from the cup excited, co-existed with the tactual and muscular feeling when he handled the cup; and that the one feeling was thus associated, for ever after, with the other.

The means by which we acquire our knowledge of the distance of objects may be reduced to three: the difference of the affections of the optic nerve; the different affections of the muscles employed in varying the refracting power of each eye, according to the distance of objects, and in producing that particular inclination of the axes of the two eyes, which directs them both equally on the particular object; and thirdly, the previous knowledge of the distance of



other objects, which form, with that which we are considering, a part of one compound perception.

To begin, then, with the affections of the retina. These become signs of distance in two ways,—by the extent of the part of the retina affected, and by the more or less vivid affection of the part.

It is evident, from the laws of optics, that, according to the distance of the object from the eye, there must, when all other circumstances are the same, be a difference of the extent of the retina on which the light falls. This illuminated portion of the nervous expanse, as supposed to be instantly perceived, is what is termed the visible figure of an object; and, though I am disposed to question the knowledge which the mind is believed to acquire of this figure, from the mere sensation of colour, to which the affection of the retina gives rise, I am far from denying that the sensation itself, whatever it may originally be, will be different according to the extent of the retina affected: as the sensation of heat is different according to the extent of the surface which has grown warmer or colder; or of fragrance, according as a small number of odorous particles have acted on a portion of the surface of the organ of smell, or a greater number of these on a greater portion of that surface. The different feelings, then, when more or less of the retina has been affected, are capable of being associated with other feelings which may co-exist with them. An object held at the distance of a foot from the eye affects one part of the retina; held at arm's length, it affects less of the retina; and this difference, not indeed as perceived in figure, but as perceived in the variety, whatever that may originally be, of the resulting sensation, being found constant and uniform, becomes, of itself, significant of the distance.

Another mode in which the affection of the retina becomes significant of distance, is by the brightness or dimness of the visible figure, and its distinctness or indistinctness of outline; or, as I would rather say, by the peculiar sensations, without regard to figure, which accompany those varieties of light. Since, at a distance, less light falls from objects on the eye, and their outline becomes less definite, a new measure is thus obtained, in addition to that which is derived from the mere difference in extent of the retina affected. In the illusion of this spontaneous measurement consists the chief magic of the painter's art. By different shades of colour he produces corresponding perceptions of distance; and thus, making one part of a plane surface seem more remote than another, converts it, as far as the mere eye can judge, into a cube or sphere, or any other solid which he chooses to present to us. By the indistinct outline which he gives to his small figures in the background of a landscape, he leads us to consider them not as diminutive in themselves, which we should conceive them to be, if, with equal smallness, their outline were clearer, but merely as less or more remote. He is thus able to vary his figures in three ways, to make them larger or smaller, more or less bright, and more or less precisely defined; and, by uniting these varieties in various proportions, to distinguish not merely what is large from what is small, but the diminutive from the distant, and the gigantic from the near.

Accordingly we find, that, in circumstances in which the medium of transmission of light from objects is much altered, our perception of distance and magnitude becomes less accurate. In a fog, objects appear to us greatly magnified; because the effect produced on the retina, in the extent of the visible figure, and

its dimness and indefinite outline, is truly the same as when a larger object, in the common state of the atmosphere, is seen by us at a distance. From the same principle, objects seen under a brighter sky, and in purer air, seem nearer than they really are, to those whose notions of distance have been acquired in a less happy climate. This has been remarked by travellers in Italy, and particularly by one of the most illustrious of those who have visited that beautiful country,—a traveller, whose attention had been particularly turned to observations of this sort. The very acute observer, of whom I speak, is Berkeley, in whose Theory of Vision there is to be found a very interesting section, in which he at once describes this impression and accounts for it.

Our affections of the retina, then, both in the extent of the nervous expansion affected, and in the species of affection, afford one set of feelings, with which the notion of distance may be associated, in the same manner as the sounds or visual characters of a language may be associated with the conceptions which they denote, or any other feelings with any other feelings.

The next set of feelings which we have to consider, in relation to our perception of distance, belong to a class, of the importance of which I have had frequent occasion to speak,—*the muscular feelings*: in the contraction of those muscles which adapt the nice refracting apparatus in each eye to the degree of refraction necessary for distinct vision in the particular case, and produce that inclination of the axes of vision to each other, which is necessary for directing both eyes equally on the object. The muscular feeling may be slight indeed, but still it is sufficient to modify, in



some degree, the whole compound sensation of the moment. One degree of contraction is attended with a particular feeling; another degree with a different feeling; and, as there are various muscles subservient to the motions of the eyes, some of which are exerted while others are quiescent, the feeling, it is evident, must vary, not with the degree of contraction merely, but also with the muscles contracted. A certain muscular feeling, however, simple or complex, accompanies the mere visual sensation, and blends with it; and it is with this compound feeling, muscular and visual, that the notion of distance is associated.

The muscular adaptation, however, it may be remarked, seems, in a great measure, to imply the very knowledge which it is supposed to give; since we cannot, instantly and voluntarily, adapt our eyes to the state necessary for distinct vision, at a particular distance, unless we have previously known that particular distance. The necessary adaptation, however, if it be not the result of a rapid change of various degrees of contraction in each particular case, may depend, not on our knowledge and will, but on an instinctive connexion of certain motions with certain feelings, in which there is as little consciousness of design, as in that very analogous instinct, or connexion of motions with feelings, which increases or diminishes the diameter of the pupil, according to the quantity of light which is poured upon the eye, when the individual, far from willing the contraction, does not know even that such a contraction has taken place.

A third element, in the calculation of the distance of an object, is the previous knowledge of the distance of other objects, which form together with it one compound perception. Thus, when we look along a road, and observe a man on horseback, who has nearly ap-

proached a house which we know, we have of course little difficulty in determining the distance of the rider. Every one must have felt how much easier his judgments of the distance of moving objects are, in scenes with which he is in some degree acquainted, than in a country which is new to him; and what aid the interposition of a variety of objects gives, even though we may not be well acquainted with the exact extent and distance of each. To an inexperienced eye, therefore, in a first voyage, a ship at a distance seems far nearer than it truly is, from the absence of varied intervening objects in the line between. Even in the case of a river, which is not so broad as to prevent us from distinguishing objects on the opposite side, it is with great difficulty that we attempt to guess the distance, with any approach to exactness. There is a constant tendency to suppose the breadth of the river less than it is, and consequently the objects on the opposite bank nearer than they are. For the same reason, the horizontal line, in which innumerable objects intervene between the eye and the horizon, appears so much longer than the line of altitude of the meridian, that the vault of the sky does not seem a hemisphere, but a far smaller segment of a great sphere. On this subject, however, rich as it is in illustration, my time will not allow me to dwell longer. But I regret this the less, as the subject is one of those which, in the department of optics, come under the consideration of one of my colleagues, whose happy genius has the art of describing fully what the narrow compass of his lectures may have obliged him to state briefly; and who leaves little for others to add, even on subjects to which he alludes only for incidental illustration.

These few very slight remarks, however, will be

sufficient to show in what manner the notion of distance may be associated with mere visual feelings, that in themselves originally involve no notion of distance: as the words of a language, which, in themselves, either as sounds or characters, involve no relation to one object more than to another, become instantly significant of particular objects, and excite emotions of love or joy, or hate, or indignation, like the very presence of some living friend or foe.

It has been very justly remarked, that, if all men had uniformly spoken the same language, in every part of the world, it would be difficult for us not to think that there is a natural connexion of our ideas and the words which we use to denote them; and it is not wonderful, therefore, that a similar illusion should take place with respect to what may be termed the universal language of vision; since, in the case of visual perception, all men may be truly said to have the same language; the same sensations of sight being to all significant of magnitude and distance. And it is well that the judgments which we form, on these important points, are thus prompt and spontaneous: for if we had to wait till we had calculated the distance and magnitude of everything around us by a measurement of angles, we should be cut off, in our optical career, before we could, with all our geometry, determine with precision whether the things which we needed most, or the objects of greatest peril to us, were ten or a thousand paces distant, and whether they were of the bulk of a molehill or of a mountain.

A miniature image of the objects which we see, is pictured on the retina in an inverted position; and though an image is pictured in each eye, we see not two objects but one. To philosophers, who are even more expert in finding mysteries than in solving them,



this single vision of the erect object, from a double image of the object inverted, has usually seemed very mysterious: and yet there is really nothing in it at all mysterious to any one who has learned to consider how much of the visual perception is referable to association. If the light reflected from a single object touched by us, had produced not two merely, but two thousand separate images in our eyes, erect or inverted, or in any intermediate degree of inclination, the visual feeling thus excited, however complex, would still have accompanied the touch of a single object; and if only it had accompanied it uniformly, the single object would have been suggested by it, precisely in the same manner as it is now suggested by the particular visual feeling that attends the present double inverted image. To this supposed anomaly in the language of vision, a perfect analogy is to be found in the most obvious cases of common language. The two words *he conquered*, excite exactly the same notion as the single Latin word *vicit*; and if any language were so paraphrastic as to employ ten words for the same purpose, there would be no great reason for philosophic wonder at the unity of the notion suggested by so many words. The two images of the single object, in the arbitrary language of visual perception, are, as it were, two words significant of one notion.

Whatever the simple original sensation of vision may be, then, it is capable of being associated with other notions, so as to become significant of them. But to what does the simple original sensation itself amount? Is it mere colour,—or is it something more?

The universal opinion of philosophers is, that it is not colour merely which it involves, but extension also; that there is a visible figure, as well as a tangible figure; and that the visible figure involves, in our in-

stant original perception, superficial length and breadth, as the tangible figure, which we learn to see, involves length, breadth, and thickness.

That it is impossible for us, at present, to separate, in the sensation of vision, the colour from the extension, I admit; though not more completely impossible, than it is for us to look on the thousand feet of a meadow, and to perceive only the small inch of greenness on our retina; and the one impossibility, as much as the other, I conceive to arise only from intimate association, subsequent to the original sensations of sight. Nor do I deny, that a certain part of the retina—which, being limited, must therefore have figure—is affected by the rays of light that fall on it, as a certain breadth of nervous expanse is affected in all the other organs. I contend only, that the perception of this limited figure of the portion of the retina affected, does not enter into the sensation itself, more than, in our sensations of any other species, there is a perception of the nervous breadth affected.

The immediate perception of visible figure has been assumed as indisputable, rather than attempted to be proved,—as, before the time of Berkeley, the immediate visual perception of distance, and of the three dimensions of matter, was supposed, in like manner, to be without any need of proof;—and it is, therefore, impossible to refer to arguments on the subject. I presume, however, that the reasons which have led to this belief of the immediate perception of a figure termed visible, as distinguished from that tangible figure which we learn to see, are the following two—the only reasons which I can even imagine:—that it is absolutely impossible, in our present sensations of sight, to separate colour from extension; and that

there are, in fact, a certain length and breadth of the retina on which the light falls.

With respect to the first of these arguments, it must be admitted, by those who contend for the immediate perception of visible figure, that it is now impossible for us to refer to our original feelings, and that we can speak with absolute certainty only of our present feelings, or, at least, of those which we remember as belonging to a period long after our first sensations.

What may, or may not, have been originally separable, we cannot, then, determine. But what, even now, is the species of extension which it is impossible for us, in our visual perceptions, to separate from colour? Is there the slightest consciousness of a perception of visible figure, corresponding with the affected portion of the retina? or is not the superficial magnitude, and the only magnitude which we connect with colour, in any case, the very superficial magnitude which we term *taught*: a magnitude that does not depend on the diameter of the retina, but is variously greater or less, depending only on the magnitude and distance of the external object.

The mere length and breadth, then, which we cannot separate from colour, are not the length and breadth of the figure termed visible.—for of the perception of these limited dimensions we have no consciousness,—but the length and breadth that are truly *taught*; and there is not a single moment of visual perception, in which the slightest evidence is afforded by our consciousness of that difficulty of separation, with respect to the affected portion of the expanse of the retina, on which the supposed argument, as to the perception of visible figure, is founded.

Even though the superficial dimensions of length and breadth, connected with colour in vision, were those of



the figured retina affected, and were necessarily limited to its small expanse, there would still be no greater impossibility of separating the colour from mere length and breadth in vision, than of separating it from the triple dimensions of length, breadth, and thickness; and the argument, therefore, if it had any force, would be equally applicable to these.

I open my eyes, in the light of day, with a wide landscape around me. I have a sensation, or perception, of varieties of colour, and of all the dimensions of matter. I cannot separate the colour from the length and breadth of the trunk of a large oak before me; but equally impossible is it for me to separate the colour from the convexity and the magnitude; and, from this equal impossibility, I might conclude, with equal force, that the perception of the convexity and the magnitude is immediate and original, as the perception of mere length and breadth. Where all things are equal, we cannot justly deny to one what we allow to another. He who affirms, that, in looking at a sphere, he can separate, as elements of his sensation, the colour and the convexity, may be allowed to use this argument of impossibility, as proof of original connexion, in the other case. But it is only a person so privileged by nature—and where is such a person to be found?—who can fairly use it.

We are able, indeed—not while we continue to look at the sphere, but with a sort of mental effort—afterwards to separate the colour from the convexity, and to imagine the same colour united with any other surface, plane or concave: the reason of which is very evident. Our sensation of colour has not been uniformly associated with one species of extension, but with all its varieties; and may, therefore, be suggested in possible co-existence with all. In all these varieties,

however, two dimensions have been constantly implied: and, therefore, the association of colour with these is complete and indissoluble. If every surface in nature had been convex, it is by no means improbable that we should have found the same difficulty, in attempting to separate colour from convexity, which we now find in attempting to separate it from mere length and breadth.

It is the same, in various other affections of the mind, as in our sensations. There are feelings which we cannot separate from other feelings, and which, we yet know, must have been originally separate. I might refer to the silent growth and maturity of almost every passion of which the mind is susceptible. But there is sufficient proof even in affections which seem instantaneous. The mother, when she looks at her babe, cannot behold it without feelings very different from those which the same form and colour, in another infant, would have excited: and yet, impossible as it is to separate, in this case, the mere visual sensation from that emotion of happy and instant fondness which accompanies it, there is surely no natural connexion of the emotion, with the mere length, and breadth, and colour.

The impossibility of separating the sensation of colour from the notion of extension, it appears, then, is not a decisive proof of an original connexion of these; for, if it were decisive, it would prove still more: and we might, from this alone, assert, with equal confidence, the original visual perception of three dimensions as that of two, and of the magnitude and figure, which we term tangible, as much as of those which we have chosen to term visible. It is surely as little possible for us, when we open our eyes on some wide and magnificent landscape, to separate the

colour, as a mere visual sensation, from the field, the mountain, the forest, the stream, the sky, as to separate it from the half inch, or inch of our retina, of the perception of which we have no consciousness in any case; and it is too much for those who deny the immediate perception of those greater magnitudes to urge, in proof of the necessary original perception of this inch or half inch, what, if valid in any respect, must establish no less the proposition which they deny than the proposition which they affirm.

But, it will be said, there is truly a certain figure of the part of the retina on which the light falls. The fact is undeniable. But the question is, not whether such a figure exist, but whether the perception of the figure necessarily form a part of the sensation. The brain, and nervous system in general, are of a certain form, when they are affected in any manner. But it does not, therefore, follow, as the fact sufficiently shows, that the knowledge of this form constitutes any part of the changeful feeling of the moment. To confine ourselves, however, to the mere senses: it is not in the organ of sight only that the nervous matter is of a certain shape; it is expanded into some shape or other, in every organ. When the whole, or a part, therefore, of the olfactory organ, is affected by the rays of odour, if I may so term them, we might, with exactly the same ground for our belief, suppose, that the knowledge of a certain extension must accompany the fragrance, because a certain nervous expanse is, in this case, affected, as that the notion of a certain extension must, for the same reason, and for the same reason alone, accompany the sensation of colour. It is because the same light which acts upon the organ of one person may be made visible to another, that we conceive it more peculiarly to be figured, as it were, on



the nervous expanse, when it is not in itself truly more figured than the number of co-existing particles of odour, which affect the nerve of smell. We cannot exhibit the particles of odour, however, acting on the nostril of any one. But, when the eye is dissected from its orbit, we can show the image of a luminous body distinctly formed upon the retina. We, the observers of the dissected eye, have thus a clearer notion of the length and breadth of the nervous matter affected in the one case than in the other. But it is not in the dissected eye that vision takes place; and as the living eye and the living nostrils are alike affected in more than one physical point, we must surely admit, that, in both cases, and in both cases equally, a certain length and breadth are affected, and that there is an olfactory figure as truly as a visible figure. The mere visibility of the image to another person cannot alter the nature of the organic affection itself to the sentient individual. If the olfactory figure be not necessarily accompanied with the perception of extension, there is no stronger reason, *a priori*, to suppose that what is termed the visible figure, which is nothing more than a similar affection of a nervous expanse, should be accompanied with the knowledge of the part of the retina affected.

These arguments, however, though they seem to me to invalidate completely the only arguments which I can imagine to be urged in support of our original perception of figure by the eye, are negative only. But there is also a positive argument, which seems to me truly decisive, against the supposed necessary perception of visible figure, that it implies the blending of things which cannot be blended. If the mere visual sensation of colour imply, in itself, no figure, I can conceive it to be blended with any figure; but not so

if it imply, in itself, a fixed definite figure, so essential to the very sensation of the colour, that, without it, the colour could not for a single moment be perceived. During the whole time, then, in which I am gazing on a wide landscape, there is, according to the opinion of those who contend for the necessary perception of visible figure, not colour merely, but a certain small coloured expanse of definite outline constantly perceived, since, without this, colour itself could not be perceived; and, during all this time, there is also a notion of a figure of a very different kind, of three dimensions, and of magnitude almost infinitely greater, combined, not with colour merely, but with the same coloured expanse. There must, therefore, be some possible combination of these forms and magnitudes, since it is the colour which we perceive that is blended with the tangible magnitudes suggested. Now, though there are certain feelings which may co-exist and unite, it appears to me that there are others which cannot be so blended. I may combine, for example, my notion of a plane or convex surface, with my notion of whiteness or blueness, hardness or softness, roughness or smoothness; but I cannot blend my notions of these two surfaces, the plane and the convex, as one surface, both plane and convex, more than I can think of a whole which is less than a fraction of itself, or a square, of which the sides are not equal, and the angles equal only to three right angles. The same blue or white surface cannot appear to me, then, at once plane and convex, as it must do if there be a visible figure of one exact outline co-existing with the tactual figure which is of a different outline; nor, even though the surface were in both cases plane, can it appear to me, at the same moment, half an inch square and many feet square. All this must be done, however, as often as

we open our eyes, if there be truly any perception of visible figure co-existing with the mere suggestions of touch. The visible figure of the sphere, on which I fix my gaze, is said to be a plane of two dimensions inseparable from colour, and this inseparable colour must yet be combined with the sphere, which I perceive distinctly to be convex. According to the common theory, therefore, it is at once, to my perception, convex and plane; and if the sphere be a large one, it is perceived, at the same moment, to be a sphere of many feet in diameter, and a plane circular surface of the diameter of a quarter of an inch. The assertion of so strange a combination of incongruities would, indeed, require some powerful arguments to justify it: yet it has been asserted, not merely without positive evidence, as if not standing in need of any proof, but in absolute opposition to our consciousness; and the only arguments which we can even imagine to be urged for it, are, as we have seen, of no weight, or would tend as much to prove the original visual perception of tangible figures, as of the figure that is termed visible.

Is it not at least more probable, therefore, that though, like the particles of odour when they act upon our nostrils, the rays of light affect a portion of the retina, so as to produce on it an image, which, if the eye were separated from its orbit, and its coats dissected, might be a distinct visible figure to the eye of another observer; this figure of the portion of the retina affected, enters as little into the simple, original sensation of sight, as the figure of the portion of the olfactory nervous expanse, when it is affected, enters into the sensations of smell?—and that, when the simple affection of sight is blended with the ideas of suggestion, in what are termed the acquired perceptions of



vision, as, for example, in the perception of a sphere. it is colour only which is blended with the large convexity, and not a small coloured plane!—which small coloured plane being necessarily limited in extent and form, so as never to be larger than the retina itself, cannot blend with various forms and magnitudes, and which, if it could even be supposed to constitute a part of the convexity of a sphere perceived by us, still could not diffuse its own limited and inseparable colour over the whole magnitude of the sphere.

I have stated to you my own opinion with respect to visible figure; an opinion which, to myself, I confess appears almost certain, or at least far more probable than the opinion generally entertained, that has no evidence in our consciousness at any one moment of vision to support it. But, on subjects of this kind, which are in themselves so very subtle, and therefore so liable to error, I must beg you, at all times, and especially when the opposite sentiment has the authority of general belief, to consider any opinion which I may submit to you, as offered more to your reflection than for your passive adoption of it. If I wish you, reverently, indeed, but still freely, to weigh the evidence of doctrines of philosophy, which are sanctioned even by the greatest names of every age, I must wish you still more, because it will be still more your duty, to weigh well the evidence of opinions that come to you with no other authority than that of *one* very fallible individual.

In looking back on the senses which we have been considering, what a boundless field do we seem already to have been endeavouring to traverse! and how admirable would the mind have been, even though it had been capable of no other office than that of representing, in the union of all its sensations, as in a living

mirror of the universe, the splendid conceptions of the great Being who formed it; or rather, of creating anew in itself, that very universe which it represents and admires!

Such is the power of the senses; of

——“senses, that inherit earth and heavens,  
Enjoy the various riches Nature yields;—  
Far nobler, give the riches they enjoy;  
Give taste to fruits, and harmony to groves,  
Their radiant beams to gold and gold's bright sire;  
Take in at once the landscape of the world,  
At a small inlet, which a grain might close,  
And half create the wondrous world they see.  
But for the magic organ's powerful charm,  
Earth were a rude, uncoloured chaos still;—  
Like Milton's Eve, when gazing on the lake,  
Man makes the matchless image, man admires.”<sup>1</sup>




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### LECTURE XXX.

#### *History of Opinions regarding Perception.*

GENTLEMEN, in my last Lecture I brought to a conclusion my remarks on Vision, with an inquiry into the justness of the universal belief, that, in the perception of objects by this sense, there are two modifications of extension, a visible as well as a tangible figure; the one originally and immediately perceived by the eye, the other suggested by former experience. I stated, at considerable length, some arguments which induce me to believe, in opposition to the universal doctrine, that, in what are termed the acquired perceptions of sight, there is not this union of two

<sup>1</sup> Young's Night Thoughts, VI. v. 420-427, 429-430, and 435-436.

separate figures of different dimensions, which cannot be combined with each other, more than the mathematical conceptions of a square and a circle can be combined in the conception of one simple figure; that the original sensations of colour, though, like the sensations of smell or taste, and every other species of sensation arising from affections of definite portions of nervous substance, do not involve the perception of this definite outline, more than mere fragrance or sweetness, but that the colour is perceived by us as figured, only in consequence of being blended by intimate associations with the feelings commonly ascribed to touch. Philosophers indeed have admitted, or at least must admit, that we have no consciousness of that which they yet suppose to be constantly taking place, and that the only figure which does truly seem to us, in vision, to be combined with colour, is that which they term tangible; that, for example, we cannot look at a coloured sphere, of four feet diameter, without perceiving a coloured figure, which is that of a sphere four feet in diameter, and not a plane circular surface of the diameter of half an inch; yet, though we have no consciousness of perceiving any such small coloured circle, and have no reason to believe that such a perception takes place, they still contend, without any evidence whatever, that we see at every moment what we do not remember to have *ever seen*.

After our very full discussion of the general phenomena of perception, as common to all our senses, and as peculiarly modified in the different tribes of our sensations, I might now quit a subject, to which its primary interest, as the origin of our knowledge, has led me to pay, perhaps, a disproportionate attention. But beside the theories, to the consideration of which our general inquiry has incidentally led us, there are



some hypothetical opinions on the subject, of which it is necessary that you should know at least the outline; not because they throw any real light on the phenomena of perception, but because, extravagantly hypothetical as they are, they are yet the opinions of philosophers, whose eminence, in other respects, renders indispensable some slight knowledge even of their very errors.

In reviewing these hypotheses, it will be necessary to call your attention to that doctrine of causation, which I before illustrated at great length, and which I trust, therefore, I may safely take for granted that you have not forgotten.

In sensation, I consider the feeling of the mind to be the simple effect of the presence of the object; or, at least, of some change which the presence of the object produces in the sensorial organ. The object has the power of affecting the mind; the mind is susceptible of being affected by the object: that is to say, when the organ, in consequence of the presence of the external object, exists in a certain state, the affection of the mind immediately follows. If the object were absent in any particular case, the mind would not exist in the state which constitutes the sensation produced by it; and, if the susceptibility of the mind had been different, the object might have existed as now without any subsequent sensation. In all this series of mere changes, or affections, in consequence of certain other preceding changes or affections, though a part of the series be material and another part mental, there is truly, as I have repeatedly remarked to you, no more mystery than in any other series of changes, in which the series is not in matter and mind successively, but exclusively in one or the other. There is a change of state of one sub-

stance, in consequence of a change of some sort in another substance; and this mere sequence of change after change is all which we know in either case. The same Almighty Being who formed the various substances to which we give the name of matter, formed also the substance to which we give the name of mind; and the qualities with which he endowed them, for those gracious ends which he intended them to answer, are mere susceptibilities of change, by which, in certain circumstances, they begin immediately to exist in different states. The weight of a body is its tendency to other bodies, varying according to the masses and distances: in this instance the quality may be said to be strictly material. The greenness or redness ascribed to certain rays of light, are words expressive merely of changes that arise in the mind when these rays are present on the retina: in this case, the quality, though ascribed to the material rays as antecedent, involves the consideration of a certain change of state in the mind which they affect. But the greenness or redness, though involving the consideration both of mind affected and matter affecting, is not less conceivable by us as a quality of matter than the weight, which also involves the consideration of two substances, affecting and affected, though both go under the name of matter alone. All the sequences of phenomena are mysterious, or none are so.

It is wonderful that the presence of a loadstone should cause a piece of iron to approach it; and that the presence of the moon, in different parts of the heavens, should be continually altering the relative tendencies of all the particles of our earth. In like manner, it is indeed wonderful that a state of our bodily organs should be followed by a change of state

of the mind, or a state of our mind by a change of state of our bodily organs; but it is not more wonderful than that matter should act on distant matter, or that one affection of the mind should be followed by another affection of the mind, since all which we know in either case, when matter acts upon matter, or when it acts upon mind, is, that a certain change of one substance has followed a certain change of another substance: a change which, in all circumstances exactly similar, it is expected by us to follow again. We have experience of this sequence of changes alike in both cases; and, but for experience, we could not in either case have predicted it.

This view of causation, however,—as not more unintelligible in the reciprocal sequences of events in matter and mind than in their separate sequences,—could not occur to philosophers while they retained their mysterious belief of secret links, connecting every observed antecedent with its observed consequent; since mind and matter seemed, by their very nature, unsusceptible of any such common bondage. A peculiar difficulty, therefore, as you may well suppose, was felt in the endeavour to account for their mutual successions of phenomena, which vanishes when the necessity of any connecting links in causation is shown to be falsely assumed.

In their views of perception, therefore, as a mental effect produced by a material cause, philosophers appear to have been embarrassed by two great difficulties: the production of this effect by remote objects, as when we look at the sun and stars in their almost inconceivable distances above our heads; and the production of this effect by a substance, which has no common property that renders it capable of being linked with the mind in the manner supposed to be



necessary for causation. These two supposed difficulties appear to me to have led to all the wild hypotheses that have been advanced with respect to perception.

The former of these difficulties,—in the remoteness of the object perceived,—even though the principle had not been false which supposes that a change cannot take place in any substance in consequence of the change of position of a distant object,—a principle which the gravitation of every atom disproves,—arose, it is evident, from false views of the real objects of perception. It was on this account that I was at some pains, when we entered on our inquiry into the nature of perception, to show the futility of the distinction which is made of objects that act immediately on the senses, and those which act on them through a medium: the medium, in this case, as light in vision, and the vibrating air in sound, being the real object of the particular sense; and the reference to a more remote object being the result not of the simple original sensation, but of knowledge previously acquired.

The mistake as to the real object of perception, and the supposed difficulty of action at a distance, must have had very considerable influence in producing the Peripatetic doctrine of perception by species, of which the cumbrous machinery seems to have been little more than a contrivance for destroying, as it were, the distance between the senses and the objects that were supposed to act on them. According to this doctrine, every object is continually throwing off certain shadowy films or resemblances of itself, which may be directly present to our organs of sense, at whatever distance the objects may be from which they flowed. These species or phantasms, the belief of the separate existence of which must have been greatly favoured by another tenet of the same school, with respect to

form as essentially distinct from the matter with which it is united, were supposed to be transmitted, in a manner which there was no great anxiety to explain, to the brain and to the mind itself. I need not detail to you the process by which these sensible species, through the intervention of what were termed the active and passive intellect, were said to become at last intelligible species, so as to be objects of our understanding. It is with the mere sensitive part of the process that we have at present any concern; and in this, of itself, there is sufficient absurdity, without tracing all the further modifications of which the absurdity is capable, if I may speak so lightly of follies that have a name which, for more than a thousand years, was the most venerable of human names, to pass them current as wisdom, and which were received and honoured as wisdom by the wise of so many generations.

I cannot pay you so very poor a compliment, as to suppose it necessary to employ a single moment of your time in confuting what is not only a mere hypothesis, (and an hypothesis which leaves all the real difficulties of perception precisely as before,) but which, even as an hypothesis, is absolutely inconceivable. If vision had been our only sense, we might perhaps have understood, at least, what was meant by the species that directly produce our visual images. But what is the phantasm of a sound or an odour? or what species is it which at one moment produces only the feeling of cold, or hardness, or figure, when a knife is pressed against us, and the next moment, when it penetrates the skin, the pain of a cut? The knife itself is exactly the same unaltered knife, when it is merely pressed against the hand, and when it produces the incision; and the difference therefore, in the two cases, must arise, not from any species which it is constantly

throwing off, since these would be the same at every moment, but from some state of difference in the mere nerves affected.

I fear, however, that I have already fallen into the folly which I professed to avoid—the folly of attempting to confute what, considered in itself, is not worthy of being seriously confuted, and scarcely worthy even of being proved to be ridiculous. It must be remembered, however, in justice to its author, that the doctrine of perception by intermediate phantasms is not a single opinion alone, but a part of a system of opinions; and that there are many errors, which, if considered singly, appear too extravagant for the assent of any rational mind, that lose much of this extravagance, by combination with other errors as extravagant. Whatever difficulties the hypothesis of species involved, it at least seemed to remove the supposed difficulty of perception at a distance, and, by the half spiritual tenuity of the sensible images, seemed also to afford a sort of intermediate link for the connexion of matter with mind; thus appearing to obviate, or at least to lessen, the two great difficulties which I suppose to have given occasion to the principal hypotheses on this subject.

When the doctrine of species, as modified, in the dark and barren age of Dialectics, by all the additional absurdities which the industrious sagacity of the schoolmen could give to it, had at length lost that empire which it never should have possessed, the original difficulty of accounting for perception, remained as before. If the cause was to be linked, in some manner or other, with its effect, how was matter, so different in all its properties, to be connected with mind?

The shortest possible mode of obviating this difficulty was, by denying that any direct causation what-



ever took place between our mind and our bodily organs ; and hence arose the system of occasional causes, as maintained by the most distinguished of the followers of Des Cartes,—a system which supposed that there is no direct agency of our mind on matter, or of matter on our mind ; that we are as little capable of moving our own limbs by our volition, as of moving, by our volition, the limbs of any other person ; as little capable of perceiving the rays of light that have entered our own eyes, as the rays which have fallen on any other eyes ; that our perception or voluntary movement is therefore to be referred, in every case, to the immediate agency of the Deity ; the presence of rays of light within our eye being the mere occasion on which the Deity himself affects our mind with vision, as our desire of moving our limbs is the mere occasion on which the Deity himself puts our limbs in motion.

It is of so much importance to have a full conviction of the dependence of all events on the great source of Being, that it is necessary to strip the doctrine, as much as possible, of everything truly objectionable, lest, in abandoning what is objectionable, we should be tempted to abandon also the important truth associated with it. The power of God is so magnificent in itself, that it is only when we attempt to add to it in our conception, that we run some risk of degrading what it must always be impossible for us to elevate.

That the changes which take place, whether in mind or in matter, are all ultimately resolvable into the will of the Deity, who formed alike the spiritual and material system of the universe, making the earth a habitation worthy of its noble inhabitant, and man an inhabitant almost worthy of that scene of divine magnificence in which he is placed, is a truth as con-

vincing to our reason as it is delightful to our devotion. What confidence do we feel in our joy at the thought of the Eternal Being from whom it flows, as if the very thought gave at once security and sanctity to our delight; and how consolatory, in our little hour of suffering, to think of Him who wills our happiness, and who knows how to produce it, even from sorrow itself, by that power which called light from the original darkness, and still seems to call, out of a similar gloom, the sunshine of every morning. Every joy thus becomes gratitude; every sorrow resignation. The eye which looks to Heaven seems, when it turns again to the scenes of earth, to bring down with it a purer radiance, like the very beaming of the presence of the Divinity, which it sheds on every object on which it gazes,—a light

"That gilds all forms  
Terrestrial, in the vast and the minute;  
The unambiguous footsteps of the God  
Who gives its lustre to an insect's wing,  
And wheels His throne upon the rolling worlds."<sup>1</sup>

That the Deity, in this sense, as the Creator of the world, and willer of all those great ends which the laws of the universe accomplish, is the author of the physical changes which take place in it, is then most true; as it is most true also, that the same Power who gave the universe its laws, can, for the particular purposes of his providence, vary these at pleasure. But there is no reason to suppose that the objects which he has made, surely for some end, have, as made by him, no efficacy, no power of being instrumental to his own great purpose, merely because whatever power they can be supposed to have, must have been derived from the Fountain of all power. It

<sup>1</sup> Cowper's Task, Book V. v. 810-814.

is, indeed, only as possessing this power that we know them to exist; and their powers, which the doctrine of occasional causes would destroy altogether, are, relatively to us, their whole existence. It is by affecting us that they are known to us. Such is the nature of the mind, and of light, for example, that light cannot be present, or, at least, the sensorial organ cannot exist in a certain state, in consequence of its presence, without that instant affection of mind which constitutes vision. If light have not this power of affecting us with sensation, it is, with respect to us, nothing, for we know it only as the cause of the visual affection. That which excites in us the feelings of extension, resistance, and all the qualities of matter, is matter; and to suppose that there is nothing, without us, which excites these feelings, is to suppose that there is no matter without, as far as we are capable of forming any conception of matter. The system of occasional causes seems, therefore, to be only a more awkward and complicated modification of the system of Berkeley; for as the Deity is, in this system, himself the author of every change, the only conceivable use of matter, which cannot affect us more than if it were not in existence, must be as a remembrance, to Him who is Omniscience itself, at what particular moment he is to excite a feeling in the mind of some one of his sensitive creatures, and of what particular kind that feeling is to be; as if the Omniscient could stand in need of any memorial, to excite in our mind any feeling which it is His wish to excite, and which is to be traced wholly to His own immediate agency. Matter, then, according to this system, has no relations to us; and all its relations are to the Deity alone. The assertors of the doctrine, indeed, seem to consider it as representing, in a more



sublime light, the divine Omnipresence, by exhibiting it to our conception as the only power in nature; but they might, in like manner, affirm that the creation of the infinity of worlds, with all the life and happiness that are diffused over them, rendered less instead of more sublime, the existence of Him who, till then, was the sole existence: for power that is derived derogates as little from the primary power as derived existence derogates from the Being from whom it flows. Yet the assertors of this doctrine, who conceive that light has no effect in vision, are perfectly willing to admit that light exists, or rather, are strenuous affirmers of its existence, and are anxious only to prove, in their zeal for the glory of Him who made it, and who makes nothing in vain, that this and all his works exist for no purpose. Light, they contend, has no influence whatever. It is as little capable of exciting sensations of colour, as of exciting a sensation of melody or fragrance; but still it exists. The production of so very simple a state as that of vision, or any other of the modes of perception, with an apparatus which is not merely complicated, but, in all its complication, absolutely without efficacy of any sort, is so far from adding any sublimity to the divine nature in our conception, that it can scarcely be conceived by the mind, without lessening, in some degree, the sublimity of the Author of the universe, by lessening, or rather destroying, all the sublimity of the universe which he has made. What is that idle mass of matter, which cannot affect us, or be known to us, or to any other created being, more than if it were not? If the Deity produces, in every case, by his own immediate operation, all those feelings which we term sensations or perceptions, he does not first create a multitude of inert and cumbrous

worlds, invisible to every eye but his own, and incapable of affecting anything whatever, that he may know when to operate, as he would have operated before. This is not the awful simplicity of that Omnipotence,

“ Whose word leaps forth at once to its effect ;  
Who calls for things that are not, and they come.”<sup>1</sup>

If, indeed, the complication of the process could remove any difficulty which truly exists, or even any difficulty which is supposed to exist, the system might be more readily adopted by that human weakness, to which the removal of a single difficulty is of so much value. But the very attempt to remove the difficulty is merely by presenting it in another form. Omnipotent as the Creator is, he is still, like that mind which he has formed after his own image, a spiritual Being; and though there can be no question as to the extent of his power over matter, the operation of this infinite power is as little conceivable by us, in any other way than as a mere antecedence of change, as the reciprocal limited action of mind and matter in man and the objects which he perceives and moves. It is itself, indeed, a proof of action of this very kind; and to state it with the view of obviating any difficulty that may be supposed to be involved in the mutual influence of mind and matter, seems as absurd as it would be for a sophist, who should profess to believe, from an examination of the wings of birds, that their heavy pinions are incapable of bearing them through the air, to illustrate his paradox by the majestic soaring of the eagle, when he mounts still higher and higher through the sunshine that encircles him, before he stoops from his height above the clouds, to the cliffs which he deigns to make his lowly home.

<sup>1</sup> Cowper's Task, Book V. v. 686-687.

The system of occasional causes, though it ceased to be known, or at least to be adopted, under that name, has not the less continued, by a mere change of denomination, to receive the assent of philosophers, who rejected it under its ancient name. It is, indeed, the spirit of this system alone which gives any sense whatever to the distinction that is universally made of causes, as physical and efficient; a distinction which implies, that, beside the antecedents and consequents in a series of changes, which are supposed to have no mutual influence, and might, therefore, be antecedent and consequent in any other order, there is some intervening agency which is, in every event of the series, the true efficient. Matter, in short, does not act on mind, nor mind on matter. The physical cause, in this nomenclature, that exists for no purpose, as being absolutely inefficient, or, in other words, absolutely incapable of producing any change whatever, is the occasional cause of the other nomenclature, and nothing more; and all which was cumbrous and superfluous in the one is equally cumbrous and superfluous in the other. On this subject, however, which I have discussed at large in my work on Cause and Effect, I need not add any remarks to those which I offered in an early part of the course. It is sufficient, at present, to point out the absolute identity of the two doctrines in everything but in name.

The next system to which I would direct your attention, is that of Malebranche, who is, indeed, to be ranked among the principal assertors of the doctrine of *occasional causes*, which we have now been considering, but who, in addition to this general doctrine, had peculiar views of the nature of perception.

His opinions on this subject are delivered at great



length, in the second volume of his Search of Truth,—*La Recherche de la Vérité*,—a work which is distinguished by much eloquence, and by many very profound remarks on the sources of human error, but which is itself an example, in the great system which it supports, of error as striking as any of those which it eloquently and profoundly discusses. It is truly unfortunate for his reputation as a philosopher, that these discussions do not form a separate work, but are blended with his own erroneous system, the outline of which every one knows too well to think of studying its details. All that is necessary, to give him his just reputation, is merely that he should have written less. He is at present known chiefly as the author of a very absurd hypothesis. He would have been known, and studied, and honoured, as a very acute observer of our nature, if he had never composed those parts of his work, to which, probably, when he thought of other generations, he looked as to the basis of his philosophic fame.

His hypothesis, as many of you probably know, is, that we perceive not objects themselves, but the ideas of them which are in God.

He begins his supposed demonstration of this paradox with a sort of negative proof, by attempting to show the inadequacy of every other mode of accounting for our perception of the ideas of things: for I need scarcely state to you, what is involved in the very enunciation of his metaphysical theorem,—that he regards ideas as distinct from perception itself, not the mind affected in a certain manner, but something separate and independent of the mind.

He then proceeds to his positive proof, asserting, in the first place, that it is “absolutely necessary that God should have in himself the ideas of all the beings

which he has created, since otherwise he could not have produced them ;"<sup>1</sup> and, in the second place, that God is united to our soul by his presence, "so that he may be said to have that relation of place to the mind which space has to body."<sup>2</sup> Wherever the human mind is, there God is, and consequently all the ideas which are in God. We have thus a fund of all the ideas necessary for perception, and a fund which, in consequence of the ubiquity of the divine mind, is ever present, requiring, therefore, for our perception of them, only that divine will, without which no change can take place.

That perception takes place by the presence of this one stock of ideas eternally present in the divine mind, with which every other mind is united, rather than by the creation of an infinite number of ideas in each separate mind, he conceives to be proved by various reasons: by the greater simplicity of this mode; by its peculiar consistency with that state of dependence on the Divine Being, as the source of all light, in which the mind of man is represented in many passages of Scripture; by various notions, such as those of infinity, genera, species, &c., the universality of which he conceived to be inconsistent with the absolute unity and limitation of every idea that does not derive a sort of infinity from the mind in which it exists; and by some other reasons, very mystical and very feeble, in which, though it may not be difficult to discover what their author meant, it is certainly very difficult to conceive how a mind so acute as his could have been influenced by them.

It is, indeed, only this relation of the mind of Malebranche to his own very strange hypothesis,

<sup>1</sup> Recherche de la Vérité, Liv. III. c. vi.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

which there is any interest in tracing: for though I have thought it my duty to give you a slight sketch of the hypothesis itself, as a part of the general history of our science, with which the reputation and genius of its author render it necessary for you to have some acquaintance, I am far from thinking that it can throw any light on our speculations, in the present improved state of the Science of Mind. I shall not waste your time, therefore, with pointing out to you the innumerable objections to his hypothesis, which, after the view already given by me of the simple process of perception, are, I trust, so manifest, as not to require to be pointed out. It may be more interesting to consider, in the history of the Philosophy of Mind, what circumstances led to the formation of the hypothesis.

In the first place, I may remark that, notwithstanding his veneration for the greater number of the opinions of Des Cartes, Malebranche unfortunately had not adopted the very enlightened views of that eminent philosopher with respect to the nature of ideas. He considered them as existences distinct from the sentient or percipient mind; and, reasoning very justly from this error, inferred their presence in the mind of the Deity, who formed the universe not casually, but according to conceptions that must have preceded creation—the archetypes or exemplars of all that was to be created. This opinion as to the eternal forms subsisting in the divine mind, agrees exactly with that of Plato, in one of the most celebrated of his doctrines, and certainly one of the most poetical; which, though a term of praise that usually does not imply much excellence of philosophy, is the species of praise to which the philosophy of Plato has the justest claim. It has been delivered, in very powerful verse, by one of our own poets, who describes himself as, in science,



a follower of the genius of ancient Greece, and who was worthy of the inspiring presence of that majestic guide :—

“ Ere the radiant sun  
Sprang from the east, or 'mid the vault of night  
The moon suspended her serenest lamp :  
Ere mountains, woods, or streams adorn'd the globe,  
Or Wisdom taught the sons of men her lore :  
Then lived the Almighty One, then, deep retired  
In his unfathom'd essence, view'd the forms,  
The forms eternal of created things ;  
The radiant sun, the moon's nocturnal lamp,  
The mountains, woods, and streams, the rolling globe,  
And Wisdom's mien celestial. From the first  
Of days, on them his love divine he fix'd,  
His admiration, till, in time complete,  
What he admired and loved, his vital smile  
Unfolded into being. Hence, the breath  
Of life, informing each organic frame ;  
Hence the green earth, and wild resounding waves ;  
Hence light and shade, alternate warmth and cold,  
And clear autumnal skies, and vernal showers,  
And all the fair variety of things.”<sup>1</sup>

It is in the writings of St Augustine, however, who had himself imbibed a considerable portion of the spirit of the Platonic philosophy, that the true source of the hypothesis which we are now reviewing is to be found. This very eminent father of the church, whose acuteness and eloquence would have entitled him to very high consideration, even though his works had related to subjects less interesting to man than those noble subjects of which they treat, seems to have met with peculiar honour from the French theologians, and to have given a very evident direction to their intellectual inquiries. It is indeed impossible to read the works of any of the theological metaphysicians of that country without meeting with constant references to the

<sup>1</sup> Pleasures of Imagination, Book I. v. 59-78.

opinions of St Austin, and an implied reference, even where it is not expressed,—particularly to the very opinions most analogous to those of Malebranche.

The opinion of Augustine, to which I particularly allude, is that which forms the principal doctrine of his metaphysical philosophy—that there is a supreme eternal universal Truth, which is intimately present to every mind, and in which all minds alike perceive the truths, which all alike are, as it were, necessitated to believe: the truths of arithmetic and geometry, for example, and the primary essential truths of morality.

These truths we feel to be eternal, because we feel that they are not contingent on the existence of those who perceive them, but were, and are, and must for ever be the same; and we feel also, that the truth is one, whatever be the number of individuals that perceive it, and is not converted into many truths, merely by the multitude of believers. “If,” says he, “in discoursing of any truth I perceive that to be true which you say, and you perceive that to be true which I say, where, I pray you, do we both see this at the very moment? I certainly see it not in you, nor you in me, but both see it in that unchangeable truth, which is beyond and above our individual minds. ‘*Si ambo videmus verum esse quod dicis, et ambo videmus verum esse quod dico, ubi, quæso, id videmus? Nec ego utique in te, nec tu in me; sed ambo in ipsâ quæ supra mentes nostras est, incommutabili veritate.*’”

You must not conceive that I am contending for the justness of the opinion which I am now stating to you; I state it merely as illustrative of the system of Malebranche. If we suppose, with Augustine, that there is one eternal Truth, which contains all truths, and is present to all minds that perceive in it the truths which it contains, it is but one step more, and

scarcely one step more, to believe that our ideas of all things are contained and perceived in one omnipresent Mind, to which all other minds are united, and which is itself the eternal Truth that is present to all. Indeed, some of the passages which are quoted in the "Search of Truth," from St Austin, show how strongly its author conceived his own opinions to be sanctioned by that ancient authority.

For some of the happiest applications which have been made of this very ancient system of Christian metaphysics, I may refer you particularly to the works of Fenelon,—to his demonstration of the existence of God, for example,—in which many of the most abstract subtilties of the Metaphysics of Augustine become living and eloquent in the reasonings of this amiable writer, who knew so well how to give, to every subject which he treated, the tenderness of his own heart, and the persuasion and devout confidence of his own undoubting belief.

In this Protestant country, in which the attention of theologians has been almost exclusively devoted to the Scriptures themselves, and little comparative attention paid to the writings of the Fathers,—unless as strictly illustrative of the texts of Scripture, or of the mere history of the Church,—the influence of the metaphysical opinions of St Austin is less to be traced; and the argument drawn from the eternal omnipresent ideas of unity, and number and infinity, on which so much stress is laid by Catholic philosophers, in demonstrating the existence of God, is hence scarcely to be found at all, or, at least, occupies a very inconsiderable place in the numerous works of our countrymen on the same great subject. The system of Malebranche might, indeed, have arisen in this country; for we have had writers who, without his genius, have adopted his



errors; but there can be no doubt that it was, by its very nature, much more likely to arise in the country which actually produced it.

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### LECTURE XXXI.

*History of Opinions regarding Perception concluded—On the External Affections combined with Desire, or on Attention.*

IN my last Lecture, Gentlemen, I gave you a slight sketch of some theories,—or, to speak more accurately, of some hypothetical conjectures which have been formed with respect to Perception,—pointing out to you, at the same time, the two supposed difficulties which appear to me to have led to them, in false views of the real objects of perception, and of the nature of causation; the difficulty of accounting, with these false views, for the supposed perception of objects at a distance, and for the agency of matter on a substance so little capable as mind of being linked with it by any common bond of connexion.

Of such hypotheses we considered three: the doctrine of the Peripatetics as to perception by species or shadowy films, that flow from the object to the organ; the Cartesian doctrine of the indirect subseriency of external objects, as the mere occasions on which the Deity himself, in every instance, produces in the mind the state which is termed perception; and the particular doctrine of Malebranche, himself a zealous defender of that general doctrine of occasional causes, as to the perception of objects, or rather of the ideas of objects in the Divine Mind.

The only remaining hypothesis which deserves to

be noticed, is a very celebrated one, of Leibnitz, the doctrine of the preëstablished harmony, which, I have no doubt, originated in the same false view of the necessity of some connecting link in causation ; and was intended, therefore, like the others, to obviate the supposed difficulty of the action of matter on mind, and of mind on matter.

According to this doctrine, the body never acts on the mind, nor the mind on the body ; but the motions of the one, and the feelings of the other, are absolutely independent, having as little influence on each other as they have on any other mind and body. The mind feels pain when the body is bruised ; but, from the preëstablished order of its own affections, it would have felt exactly the same pain, though the body at that moment had been resting upon roses. The arm, indeed, moves at the very moment when the mind has willed its motion ; but it moves of itself, in consequence of its own preëstablished order of movement, and would move, therefore, equally, at that very moment, though the mind had wished it to remain at rest. The exact correspondence of the motions and feelings which we observe, arises merely from the exactness of the choice of the Deity in uniting with a body that was formed by Him, to have, of itself, a certain order of independent motions, a mind, that was formed of itself to have a certain order of independent but corresponding feelings. In the unerring exactness of this choice, and mutual adaptation, consists the exquisiteness of the harmony. But, however exquisite, it is still a harmony only, without the slightest reciprocal action.

The mind, and its organic frame, are, in this system—to borrow the illustration of it which is commonly used—like two time-pieces, which have no connexion with

each other, however accurately they may agree, and each of which would indicate the hour, in the very same manner, though the other had been destroyed. In like manner, the soul of Leibnitz,—for the great theorist himself may surely be used to illustrate his own hypothesis,—would, though his body had been annihilated at birth, have felt and acted, as if with its bodily appendage, studying the same works, inventing the same systems, and carrying on, with the same warfare of books and epistles, the same long course of indefatigable controversy; and the body of this great philosopher, though his SOUL had been annihilated at birth, would not merely have gone through the same process of growth, eating and digesting, and performing all its other ordinary animal functions, but would have achieved for itself the same intellectual glory, without any consciousness of the works which it was writing and correcting,—would have argued, with equal strenuousness, for the principle of the sufficient reason, claimed the honours of the differential calculus, and laboured to prove this very system of the pre-established harmony, of which it would certainly, in that case, have been one of the most illustrious of examples.

To say of this hypothesis, which was the dream of a great mind,—but of a mind, I must confess, which was very fond of dreaming, and very apt to dream,—that it is a mere hypothesis, is to speak of it too favourably. Like the doctrine of occasional causes, it supposes a system of external things, of which, by the very principle of the hypothesis, there can be no evidence, and which is absolutely of no utility whatever, but as it enables a philosopher to talk more justly of preëstablished harmonies, without the possibility, however, of knowing that he is talking more justly.



If the mind would have exactly the same feelings as now,—the same pleasures, and pains, and perceptions of men and houses, and everything external, though everything external, comprehending of course the very organs of sense, had been annihilated ages of ages before itself existed, what reason can there be to suppose that this useless system of bodily organs, and other external things, exists at present? The universal irresistible belief of mankind, to which philosophers of a different school might appeal, cannot be urged in this case, since the admission of it, as legitimate evidence, would, at once, disprove the hypothesis. We do not more truly believe that light exists, than we believe that it affects us with vision, and that, if there had been no light, there would have been no sensation of colour. To assert the preëstablished harmony, is, indeed, almost the same thing as to affirm and deny the same proposition. It is to affirm in the first place, positively, that matter exists, since the harmony which it asserts is of matter and mind;—and then to affirm, as positively, that its existence is useless, that it cannot be perceived by us, and that we are, therefore, absolutely incapable of knowing whether it exist or not.

After stating to you so many hypotheses, which have been formed on this subject, I need scarcely remark, what a fund of perpetual conjecture, and, therefore, of perpetual controversy, there is in the varied wonders of the external and internal universe, when it is so very difficult for a few philosophers to agree, as to what it is which gives rise to the simplest sensation of warmth, or fragrance, or colour. It might be thought that, in the intellectual opera,—if I may revert to that ingenious and lively allegory, of which I availed myself in one of my early Lectures, in treat-

ing of general physical inquiry,—as the whole spectacle which we behold, is passing within our minds, we are, in this instance at least, fairly behind the scenes, and see the mechanism of Nature truly as it is. But though we are really behind the scenes, and even in one sense of the word, may be said to be ourselves the movers of the machinery by which the whole representation is carried on, still the minute parts and arrangements of the complicated mechanism are concealed from *our* view, almost as completely as from the observation of the distant spectators. The primary springs and weights, indeed, by the agency of which Phaeton seemed to be carried off by the winds, are left visible to us: and we know, that when we touch a certain spring, it will put in motion a concealed set of wheels, or that, when we pull a cord, it will act upon a system of pulleys, which will ultimately produce a particular effect desired by us: but what is the number of wheels or pulleys, and how they are arranged and adapted to each other so as to produce the effect, are left to our penetration to divine. On this subject, we have seen, that as many grave absurdities have been formed into systems, and honoured with commentaries and confutations, as in the opera of external nature, at which, in the quotation formerly made to you, the Pythagorases and Platos were supposed to be present. “It is not a system of cords and pulleys which we put in motion,” says Aristotle; “for to move such a heavy and distant mass would be beyond our power, but only a number of little phantasms connected with them, which have the form indeed, of cords and pulleys, but not the substance, and which are light enough, therefore, to fly at our very touch.”—“We do not truly move any wheels,” says the great inventor of the System of Occasional

Causes; "for, as we did not make the wheels, how can *we* know the principle on which their motion is to depend, or have such a command over them as to be capable of moving them? But when we touch a spring, it is the occasion on which the mechanist himself, who is always present, though invisible, and who must know well how to move them, sets them instantly in motion."—"We see the motion," says Malebranche, "not by looking at the wheels or pulleys—for there is an impenetrable veil which hides them from us—but by looking at the Mechanist himself, who *must* see them, because He is the mover of them; and whose eye, in which they are imaged as He gazes on them, must be a living mirror of all which he moves."—"It is not a spring that acts upon the wheels," says Leibnitz; "though, when the spring is touched, the wheels begin to move immediately, and never begin to move at any other time. This coincidence, however, is not owing to any connexion of the one with the other; for, though the spring were destroyed, the wheels would move exactly as at present, beginning and ceasing at the same precise moments. It is owing to a preëstablished harmony of motion in the wheels and spring; by which arrangement the motion of the wheels, though completely independent of the other, always begins at the very moment when the spring is touched."—"No," exclaims Berkeley, "it is all illusion. The wheels, and cords, and weights, are not seen because they exist, but exist because they are seen; and if the whole machinery is not absolutely annihilated when we shut our eyes, it is only because it finds shelter in the mind of some other Being whose eyes are never shut, and are always open, therefore, at the time when ours are closing."

From all this variety of conjectural speculations,



the conclusion which you will perhaps have drawn most readily, is that which is too often the result of our researches in the History of Science, that there may, as D'Alembert truly says, be a great deal of philosophizing, in which there is very little of philosophy.

I have now finished the remarks which I had to make on the very important class of our external affections of mind, as they may be considered simply; but it is not always simply that they exist; and, when they occur in combination with other feelings, the appearance which they assume is sometimes so different as to lead to the erroneous belief that the complex feeling is the result of a distinct power of the mind.

When, in my attempt to arrange the various feelings of which the mind is susceptible, I divided these into our external and internal affections, according as their causes are, in the one case, objects without the mind, and, in the other case, previous feelings or affections of the mind itself; and subdivided this latter class of internal affections into the two orders of our intellectual states of mind, and our emotions; I warned you that you were not to consider these as always arising separately, and as merely successive to each other: that, in the same manner, as we may both see and smell a rose, so may we see, or compare, or remember, while under the influence of some one or other of our emotions; though, at the same time, by analysis, or at least by a reflective process that is similar to analysis, we may be able to distinguish the emotion from the co-existing perception, or remembrance, or comparison,—as we are able, by a very easy analysis, in like manner, when we both see and smell a rose, to distinguish, in our complex perception, the fragrance from the colour and form.

There is one emotion, in particular, that is capable of so many modifications, and has so extensive a sway over human life, which it may be said almost to occupy from the first wishes of our infancy to the last of our old age, that it cannot fail to be combined with many of our other feelings, both sensitive and intellectual. The emotion to which I allude is desire; a feeling which may exist of various species and degrees, from the strongest passion of which the mind is susceptible, to the slightest wish of knowing a little more accurately the most trifling object before us; and though, in speaking of it at present, I am anticipating what, according to the strict division which we have made, should not be brought forward till we consider the emotions in general, this anticipation is absolutely unavoidable for understanding some of the most important phenomena, both of perception, which we have been considering, and of those intellectual faculties which we are soon to consider. I need not repeat to you, that Nature is not to be governed by the systems which we form; that though our systematic arrangements ought not to be complicated, her phenomena are almost always so; and that, while everything is thus intermixed and connected with everything in the actual phenomena of mind as well as of matter, it would be vain for us to think of accommodating our physical discussions, with absolute exactness, even to the most perfect divisions and subdivisions which we may be capable of forming. All that is necessary is, that we should not depart from our order of arrangement without some advantage in view, and an advantage greater than the slight evil which may arise from the appearance of temporary confusion.

The reason of my anticipation, in the present instance, is to explain to you what I conceive to con-

stitute the phenomena of attention,—a state of mind which has been understood to imply the exercise of a peculiar intellectual power, but which, in the case of attention to objects of sense, appears to be nothing more than the co-existence of desire with the perception of the object to which we are said to attend; as, in attention to other phenomena of the mind, it is, in like manner, the co-existence of a particular desire with these particular phenomena. The desire, indeed, modifies the perception, rendering our feeling more intense, as any other emotion would do that has equal relation to the object. But there is no operation of any power distinct from the desire and perception themselves.

To understand this fully, however, it may be necessary to make some previous remarks on the co-existence of sensations.

In the circumstances in which we are placed by our beneficent Creator, in a world of objects capable of exciting in us various feelings, and with senses awake to the profusion of delight,—breathing and moving in the midst of odours, and colours, and sounds, and pressed alike in gentle reaction, whether our limbs be in exercise or repose, by that firm soil which supports us, or the softness on which we rest,—in all this mingling action of external things, there is scarcely a moment in which any one of our feelings can be said to be truly simple.

Even when we consider but one of our organs, to the exclusion of all the others, how innumerable are the objects that concur in producing the complex affections of a single sense! In the eye, for example, how wide a scene is open to us, wherever our glance may be turned!—woods, fields, mountains, rivers, the whole atmosphere of light, and that magnificent luminary,



which converts into light the whole space through which it moves, as if incapable of existing but in splendour. The mere opening of our eyelid is like the withdrawing of a veil which before covered the universe :—It is more ; it is almost like saying to the universe, which had perished, Exist again !

Innumerable objects, then, are constantly acting together on our organs of sense ; and it is evident that many of these can, at once, produce an effect of some sort in the mind, because we truly perceive them as a co-existing whole. It is not a single point of light only which we see, but a wide landscape ; and we are capable of comparing various parts of the landscape with each other,—of distinguishing various odours in the compound fragrance of the meadow or the garden,—of feeling the harmony of various co-existing melodies.

The various sensations, then, may co-exist, so as to produce one complex affection. When they do co-exist, it must be remarked, that they are individually less intense. The same sound, for example, which is scarcely heard in the tumult of the day, is capable of affecting us powerfully if it recur in the calm of the night ; not that it is then absolutely louder, but because it is no longer mingled with other sounds, and other sensations of various kinds, which rendered it weaker, by co-existing with it. It may be regarded, then, as a general law of our perceptions, that, when many sensations co-exist, each individually is less vivid than if it existed alone.

It may be considered almost as another form of the same proposition to say, that when many sensations co-exist, each is not merely weaker, but less distinct from the others with which it is combined. When a few voices sing together, we easily recognise each separate voice. In a very full chorus, we distinguish



each with more difficulty; and if a great multitude were singing together, we should scarcely be able to distinguish any one voice from the rest, more than to distinguish the noise of a single billow, or a single dashing of a few particles of agitated air, in the whole thunders of the ocean and the storm.

When many sensations co-exist, and are, therefore, of course weaker and less distinct, if any one were suddenly to become much more intense, the rest would fade in proportion, so as scarcely to be felt. A thousand faint sounds murmur around us, which are instantly hushed by any loud noise. If, when we are looking at the glittering firmament of stars in a winter night, any one of those distant orbs were to become as radiant as our own sun, which is itself but the star of our planetary system, there can be no question that, like our sun on its rising, it would quench, with its brilliancy, all those little glimmering lights, which would still shine on us, indeed, as before, but would shine on us without being perceived. It may be regarded, then, as another general law of the mind, that when many sensations co-exist, of equal intensity, the effect of the increased intensity of one is a diminished intensity of those which co-exist with it.

Let us now, for the application of these remarks, consider what it is which takes place in attention, when many objects are together acting on our senses, and we attend, perhaps, only to a single sensation. As a mere description of the process, I cannot use a happier exemplification than that which Condillac has given us in his *Logique*.

Let us imagine a castle, which commands from its elevation an extensive view of a domain, rich with all the beauties of nature and art. It is night when



we arrive at it. The next morning our window-shutters open at the moment when the sun has just risen above the horizon, and close again the very moment after.

Though the whole sweep of country was shown to us but for an instant, we must have seen every object which it comprehends within the sphere of our vision. In a second or a third instant we could have received only the same impressions which we received at first; consequently, though the window had not been closed again, we should have continued to see but what we saw before.

This first instant, however, though it unquestionably showed us all the scene, gave us no real knowledge of it; and, when the windows were closed again, there is not one of us who could have ventured to give even the slightest description of it,—a sufficient proof that we may have seen many objects, and yet have learned nothing.

At length the shutters are opened again, to remain open while the sun is above the horizon; and we see once more what we saw at first. Even now, however, if, in a sort of ecstasy, we were to continue to see at once, as in the first instant, all this multitude of different objects, we should know as little of them when the night arrived as we knew when the window-shutters were closed again after the very moment of their opening.

To have a knowledge of the scene, then, it is not sufficient to behold it all at once, so as to comprehend it in a single gaze; we must consider it in detail, and pass successively from object to object. This is what Nature has taught us all. If she has given us the power of seeing many objects at once, she has given us also the faculty of looking but at one,—that is to

say, of directing our eyes on one only of the multitude; and it is to this faculty—which is a result of our organisation, says Condillac—that we owe all the knowledge which we acquire from sight.

The faculty is common to us all: and yet, if afterwards we were to talk of the landscape which we had all seen, it would be very evident that our knowledge of it would not be exactly the same. By some of us, a picture might be given of it with tolerable exactness, in which there would be many objects such as they were, and many, perhaps, which had very little resemblance to the parts of the landscape which we wished to describe. The picture which others might give, would probably be so confused, that it would be quite impossible to recognise the scene in the description, and yet all had seen the same objects and nothing but the same objects. The only difference is, that some of us had wandered from object to object irregularly, and that others had looked at them in a certain order.

Now, what is this order? Nature points it out to us herself. It is the very order in which she presents to us objects. There are some which are more striking than others, and which, of themselves, almost call to us to look at them; they are the predominant objects, around which the others seem to arrange themselves. It is to them, accordingly, that we give our first attention; and when we have remarked their relative situations, the others gradually fill up the intervals.

We begin, then, with the principal objects; we observe them in succession; we compare them, to judge of their relative positions. When these are ascertained, we observe the objects that fill up the intervals, comparing each with the principal object, till we have fixed the positions of all.

When this process of successive, but regular observation, is accomplished, we know all the objects and their situations, and can embrace them with a single glance. Their order, in our mind, is no longer an order of mere succession; it is simultaneous. It is that in which they exist, and we see it at once distinctly.

The comprehensive knowledge thus acquired, we owe to the mere skill with which we have directed our eyes from object to object. The knowledge has been acquired in parts successively; but, when acquired, it is present at once to our mind, in the same manner as the objects which it retraces to us are all present to the single glance of the eye that beholds them.

The description which I have now given you, very nearly after the words of Condillac, is, I think, a very faithful representation of a process of which we must all repeatedly have been conscious. It seems to me, however, faithful as it is as a mere description, to leave the great difficulty unexplained, and even unremarked. We see a multitude of objects, and we have one complex indistinct feeling. We wish to know the scene more accurately, and, in consequence of this wish, though the objects themselves continue as before, we no longer seem to view them all, but only one, or a few; and the few, which we now see, we see more distinctly. Such I conceive to be the process; but the difficulty is, that though we seem to view only a few objects, and these much more distinctly, the field of the eye still comprehends a wide expanse, the light from which scarcely affects us, while the light from other parts of it, though not more brilliant, produces in us distinct perception. It is vain for Condillac to say, that it is in consequence of a faculty which we have of directing our eyes on one object, a faculty which is the result of our organisation, and which is common to all man-



kind; for, in the first place, if this direction of our eyes, of which he speaks, on a single object, be meant, in its strict sense, of the eye itself, which we direct, it is not true that we have any such faculty. We cannot direct our eyes so as not to comprehend equally in our field of vision, many objects beside that single object which is supposed to have fixed our attention; and if, by the direction of our eyes, be meant the exclusive or limited perception by our mind itself, there remains the difficulty,—how it happens, that while light from innumerable objects falls on our retina as before, it no longer produces any distinct vision relatively to the objects from which it comes,—while light, probably not more brilliant, from other objects, produces vision much more distinct than before. Let us consider this difficulty, which, in truth, constitutes the principal phenomenon of attention, a little more fully.

When Condillac speaks of the faculty of the mind, by which he supposes it capable of directing the eye, exclusively, on certain objects, he must speak of that only of which we are conscious, previously to the more distinct perception of those objects, as certain parts of the scene.

What is it, then, of which we are conscious, between the indistinct perception of the wide scene, and the distinct perception of parts of the scene?

In the first place, there is a general desire of knowing the scene more accurately. This is the primary feeling of the process of attention. But this primary feeling is soon succeeded by others. Indistinct as the whole complex scene may be, some parts of it more brilliant, or more striking in general character, are less indistinct than others. There are a few more prominent parts, as Condillac says, around which the rest are indistinctly arranged.

With some one of these, then, as in itself more impressive and attractive, we begin; our general desire of knowing the whole scene having been followed by a wish to know this principal part more accurately.

The next step is to prevent the eye itself from wandering, that no new objects may distract it, and that there may be as little confusion as possible of the rays from different objects, on that part of the retina on which the rays fall from the particular object, which we wish to consider. We fix our eyes, therefore, and our whole body, as steadily as we can, by the muscles subservient to these purposes.

So far, unquestionably, no new faculty is exercised. We have merely the desire of knowing the scene before us,—the selection of some prominent object, or rather the mere perception of it, as peculiarly prominent,—the desire of knowing it particularly,—and the contraction of a few muscles, in obedience to our volition.

No sooner, however, has all this taken place, than instantly, or almost instantly, and without our consciousness of any new and peculiar state of mind intervening in the process, the landscape becomes to our vision altogether different. Certain parts only, those parts which we wished to know particularly, are seen by us; the remaining parts seem almost to have vanished. It is as if everything before had been but the doubtful colouring of enchantment, which had disappeared, and left to us the few prominent realities on which we gaze; or rather, it is as if some instant enchantment, obedient to our wishes, had dissolved every reality besides, and brought closer to our sight the few objects which we desired to see.

Still, however, all of which we are truly conscious, as preceding immediately the change of appearance in

the scene, is the mere desire of which I have spoken, combined probably with expectation of that more distinct vision which follows. There may be a combination of feelings, but no new and peculiar feeling, either as simple, or co-existing with other feelings,—no indication, in short, of the exercise of a new power.

Even though we should be incapable, therefore, of understanding how the desire should have this effect, it would not be the less true that the desire of knowing accurately a particular object in a group, is instantly,—or, at least, instantly after some organic change which may probably be necessary,—followed by a more vivid and distinct perception of the particular object, and a comparative faintness and indistinctness of the other objects that co-exist with it; and that what we call attention is nothing more.

Are the comparative distinctness and indistinctness, however, a result which we had no reason to expect? or are they not rather what might, in some degree at least, have been expected, from our knowledge of the few physical facts with respect to our co-existing sensations, which I have already pointed out to you, and from the circumstance which we are next to consider? We have seen, in the observations already made by us, that many co-existing perceptions are indistinct, and that when one becomes more vivid, the others become still fainter. All that is necessary, therefore, is to discover some cause of increased vividness of that one to which we are said to attend.

If we can discover any reason why this should become more vivid, the comparative indistinctness of the other parts of the scene may be considered as following of course.

Such a cause exists, unquestionably, in that feeling of desire, without which there can be no attention.



To attend, is to have a desire of knowing that to which we attend; and attention without desire is a verbal contradiction, an inconsistency, at least, as great as if we were said to desire to know without any desire of knowing, or to be attentive without attention.

When we attend, then, to any part of a complex group of sensations, there is always an emotion of desire, however slight the emotion may be, connected exclusively with that particular part of the group to which we attend: and whatever effect our emotions produce on the complex feelings that accompany them, we may expect to be produced, in some greater or less degree, by the desire in the complex process which we term attention.

The effect which our expectation might anticipate, is the very effect that is truly found to take place,—an increased liveliness of that part of the complex group, to which alone the desire relates.

That it is the nature of our emotions of every sort, to render more vivid all the mental affections with which they are peculiarly combined, as if their own vivacity were in some measure divided with these, every one who has felt any strong emotion, must have experienced. The eye has, as it were, a double quickness to perceive what we love or hate, what we hope or fear. Other objects may be seen slightly; but these, if seen at all, become instantly permanent, and cannot appear to us without impressing their presence, as it were, in stronger feeling on our senses and our soul.

Such is the effect of emotion, when combined even with sensations that are of themselves, by their own nature, vivid; and mark, therefore, less strikingly the increase of vividness received. The vivifying effect,

however, is still more remarkable, by its relative proportion, when the feelings with which the emotion is combined are in themselves peculiarly faint, as in the case of mere memory or imagination. The object of any of our emotions, thus merely conceived by us, becomes, in many cases, so vivid as to render even our accompanying perceptions comparatively faint. The mental absence of lovers, for example, is proverbial; and what is thus termed, in popular language, absence, is nothing more than the greater vividness of some mere conception, or other internal feeling, than of any, or all of the external objects present at the time, which have no peculiar relation to the prevailing emotion:—

“The darken’d sun  
Loses his light: The rosy-bosom’d Spring  
To weeping Fancy pines; and yon bright arch,  
Contracted, bends into a dusky vault.  
All nature fades, extinct: and she alone,  
Heard, felt, and seen, possesses every thought,  
Fills every sense, and pants in every vein.  
Books are but formal dulness,—tedious friends,  
And sad amid the social band he sits,  
Lonely and unattentive. From his tongue  
The unfinish’d period falls: while borne away  
On swelling thought, his wafted spirit flies  
To the vain bosom of his distant Fair;  
And leaves the semblance of a lover fixed  
In melancholy site, with head declined  
And love-dejected eyes.”<sup>1</sup>

What brighter colours the fears of superstition give to the dim objects perceived in twilight, the inhabitants of the village who have to pass the churchyard at any late hour, and the little students of ballad lore, who have carried with them from the

<sup>1</sup> Thomson's Seasons: Spring, v. 1006-1021.

nursery many tales which they almost tremble to remember, know well. And in the *second sight* of this northern part of the island, there can be no doubt, that the objects which the seers conceive themselves to behold, truly are more vivid, as conceptions, than, but for the superstition and the melancholy character of the natives, which harmonize with the objects of this gloomy foresight, they would have been; and that it is in consequence of this brightening effect of the emotion, as concurring with the dim and shadowy objects which the vapoury atmosphere of our lakes and valleys presents, that fancy, relatively to the individual, becomes a temporary reality. The *gifted eye*, which has once believed itself favoured with such a view of the future, will, of course, ever after have a quicker foresight and more frequent revelations; its own wilder emotion communicating still more vivid forms and colours to the objects which it dimly perceives.

On this subject, however, I need not seek any additional illustration. I may fairly suppose you to admit, as a general physical law of the Phenomena of Mind, that the influence of every emotion is to render more vivid the perception or conception of its object.

I must remark, however, that when the emotion is very violent, as in the violence of any of our fiercer passions, though it still renders every object, with which it harmonizes, more vivid and prominent, it mingles with them some degree of its own confusion of feeling. It magnifies and distorts; and what it renders brighter it does not therefore render more distinct:—

“The flame of passion, through the struggling soul  
Deep-kindled, shows across that sudden blaze  
The object of its rapture, vast of size,  
With fiercer colours and a night of shade.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Pleasures of Imagination, Book II. v. 137-140.



The species of desire which we are considering, however, is not of this fierce and tempestuous kind.

Emotions of a calmer species have the vivifying effect without the indistinctness; and precisely of this degree is that desire which constitutes attention, as co-existing with the sensations, or other feelings to which we are said to attend.

We have found, then, in the desire which accompanies attention, or rather which chiefly constitutes it, the cause of that increased intensity which we sought.

When all the various objects of a scene are of themselves equally, or nearly equally, interesting or indifferent to us, the union of desire, with any particular perception of the group, might be supposed, *a priori*, to render this perception in some degree more vivid than it was before. It is not necessary that this difference of vividness should take place wholly, or even be very striking, in the first instant; for, by becoming in the first instant even slightly more vivid, it acquires additional colouring and prominence, so as to increase that interest which led us originally to select it for our first minute observation, and thus to brighten it more and more progressively. Indeed, when we reflect on our consciousness, during what is called an effort of attention, we feel that some such progress as this really takes place, the object becoming gradually more distinct while we gaze, till at length it requires a sort of effort to turn away to the other co-existing objects, and to renew with them the same process.

Attention, then, is not a simple mental state, but a process or a combination of feelings. It is not the result of any peculiar power of the mind, but of those mere laws of perception, by which the increased

vividness of one sensation produces a corresponding faintness of others co-existing with it, and of that law of our emotions, by which they communicate greater intensity to every perception, or other feeling, with which they co-exist and harmonize.

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### LECTURE XXXII.

*On the External Affections of Mind combined with Desire, continued—On the Internal Affections of Mind—Classification of them.*

IN my last Lecture, Gentlemen, I concluded my sketch of the different hypotheses of philosophers with respect to perception, with an account of that Pre-established Harmony, by which Leibnitz, excluding all reciprocal agency of mind and matter, endeavoured to account for the uniform coincidence of our mental feelings with our bodily movements; an hypothesis which, though it does not seem to have gained many followers out of Germany, produced the most enthusiastic admiration in the country of its author. I may remark, by the way, as a very striking example of the strange mixture of seemingly opposite qualities, which we frequently find in the character of nations, that, while the country of which I speak has met with ridicule, most unjust in degree, as national ridicule always is, for the heaviness of its laborious erudition, it must be allowed to surpass all other countries in the passionate enthusiasm of its philosophy, which, particularly in metaphysics, from the reign of Leibnitz to the more recent worship paid to the tran-

scendentalism of Kant, seems scarcely to have admitted of any calm approbation, or to have known any other inquirers than violent partisans and violent foes.

After my remarks on this hypothesis, which closed my view of our external affections of mind, as they exist simply, I next proceeded to consider them as they exist, combined with desire, in that state of the mind which is termed *attention*, a state which has been supposed to indicate a peculiar intellectual power, but which, I endeavoured to show you, admits of being analyzed into other more general principles.

It is to our consciousness, of course, that we must refer for the truth of any such analysis; and the process which it reveals to us, in attention, seems, I think, to justify the analysis which I made, indicating a combination of simpler feelings, but not any new and distinct species of feeling, to be referred to a peculiar faculty.

We see many objects together, and we see them indistinctly. We wish to know them more accurately, and we are aware that this knowledge can be acquired only in detail. We select some one more prominent object from the rest, or rather, without any selection on our part, this object excites, in a higher degree, our desire of observing it particularly, merely by being more prominent, or, in some other respect, more interesting than the rest. To observe it particularly, we fix our body, and our eyes,—for it is a case of vision which I have taken for an example,—as steadily as possible, that the light from the same points of the object may continue to fall on the same points of the retina. Together with our wish, we have an expectation, the natural effect of uniform



past experience, that the object will now be more distinctly perceived by us; and, in accordance with this expectation, when the process which I have described is completed, the object, as if it knew our very wish and hastened to gratify it, does become more distinct; and, in proportion as it becomes thus more vivid, the other objects of the group become gradually fainter, till at length they are scarcely felt to be present. Such, without the intervention of any new and peculiar state of mind, is the mental process, as far as we are conscious of it; and, if this be the process, there is no reason to infer in it the operation of any power of the mind different from those which are exercised in other cases. The general capacities of perception, and desire, and expectation, and voluntary command of certain muscles, which, on every view of the phenomena of attention, we must allow the mind to possess, are of themselves sufficient to explain the phenomena, and preclude, therefore, any further reference.

The brightening of the objects to which we attend, that is to say, of the objects which have interested us, and which we feel a desire of knowing, and the consequent fading of the other co-existing objects, I explained, by the well-known influence, not of desire merely, but of all our emotions, in rendering more vivid those objects of perception or fancy, with which they harmonize; and I illustrated this influence by various examples.

The phantasms of imagination, in the reveries of our waking hours, when our external senses are still open, and quick to feel, are, as mere conceptions, far less vivid than the primary perceptions from which they originally flowed; and yet, under the influence of any strong emotion, they become so much more bright

and prominent than external things, that, to the impassioned muser on distant scenes and persons, the scenes and persons truly around him are almost as if they were not in existence. If a mere conception, then, faint as it must always be by its own nature, can thus be rendered more vivid than reality by the union of any strong desire, it is surely less wonderful that the same cause should communicate the same superior vividness to the brighter realities of perception. If what we remember with interest, and wish to see again, become so much more vivid in our fancy, merely by this very wish, that we scarcely perceive any one of the innumerable objects before our eyes, what we truly see, in its own lively colouring, and feel a strong desire of knowing more intimately, may well be supposed to render us less sensible to the other co-existing objects, which the very shadows of our imagination, when brightened by a similar desire, were able mentally to annihilate or eclipse.

In addition to this direct vivifying influence of the desire itself, some part, and perhaps a very considerable part, of the brightening of the object, during attention, may arise indirectly from the mere muscular adaptation of the organ. I do not speak merely of that internal adaptation, whatever it may be, which accommodates the organ to the object, and, therefore, varies with the distance of the object, but of that simpler contraction which keeps the organ, as a whole, steadily fixed. It is proved by many facts, that a certain time is necessary for vision, and, probably, in like manner, for all our perceptions. A cannon ball, for example, though it must have reflected light to us, during its passage, may yet pass before our eyes so rapidly as not to be perceived; and, if a part of the eye be affected, in a certain manner, by one colour, and a

different colour fall upon it so rapidly after the first, that the former affection has not previously ceased, the result is not the visual affection which the second colour alone would have produced, but that which would have arisen at once from a mixture of the two colours. In this way, in an experiment, which has been often performed, for the demonstration of this simple and beautiful fact; if a cylinder be painted in longitudinal bars, with the prismatic colours, in certain proportions, and be revolved rapidly on its axis, its surface to the eye will not seem to present any one of the colours which are really painted on it, but a uniform whiteness, which it has not, on a single point of its whole surface.

If rays of different colours, falling in rapid succession on the same points of the retina, thus seem to mingle with each other, and produce one confused effect, it must evidently be of great importance, for distinct vision, that the eyes should be so fixed, that the rays from the objects which we wish to observe, may not fall on parts of the retina previously affected by the light of other objects, but, as much as possible, on the same parts, during the whole time of our observation. This can be done, as I have said, only by the continued agency of certain muscles; and hence arises that feeling of muscular effort, of which we are conscious in the process. How difficult it is for us to keep a muscle, for any length of time, in the same exact point of contraction, without the slightest deviation from this point, is well known to physiologists; and it is not wonderful, therefore, that, in attention, we should be conscious of a considerable effort, in endeavouring to fix steadily any of our organs. The power of thus fixing our muscles, is a power which improves by habitual exercise; and it is probably very



much in this way that the practised eye is able so rapidly to distinguish the minute parts of objects, which require from others a much longer effort of attention.

But, whatever the effect of the muscular adaptation may be, it is not the less certain, if we reflect on our feelings, that the mental part of the process of attention involves nothing more, in addition to the primary perception, which is its object, than desire with expectation. This is all of which we are truly conscious previously to the brightening of the perception itself, to which we are said to attend;—a brightening which, from the general laws of emotion, might very naturally be expected as the result of the union of desire with any of our sensations. In such circumstances, then, it is not wonderful that we should remember best the objects to which we pay most attention, since this is only to say that we remember best the objects on which we have dwelt longest, and with greatest interest, and which we have therefore known most accurately.

Such are our sensations or perceptions, when united with desire, exhibiting appearances which seem at first to indicate, though they do not truly indicate, a peculiar power or susceptibility of the mind. We shall find, in considering our intellectual states of mind, the order of mental phenomena, to which we next proceed, that the union of desire with these has led, in like manner, to the belief of many distinct intellectual powers, which yet, like attention, admit of being analyzed into simpler elements. These intellectual phenomena themselves, in their simple state, must, however, be first examined by us.

Having now, then, offered all the observations for which our limited course allows me room, on the very

important primary class of external affections of the mind, I proceed, according to our general division, to consider the secondary class of its internal affections; those states of it which are not the result of causes foreign to the mind itself, but immediate consequents of its own preceding feelings.

The Divine Contriver of our mental frame, who formed the soul to exist in certain states, on the presence of external things, formed it also to exist, in certain successive states, without the presence or direct influence of anything external; the one state of the mind being as immediately the cause of the state of mind which follows it, as, in our external feelings, the change produced in our corporeal organ of sense is the cause of any one of the particular affections of that class. In the one class, that of our internal affections, the phenomena depend on the laws which regulate the successive changes of state of the mind itself. In the other class, that of our external affections, they depend on the laws of the mind, indeed, which is susceptible of these peculiar changes of state; but they depend, in an equal degree, on the laws which give to matter its peculiar qualities, and, consequently, its peculiar influence on this mental susceptibility. If light were to be annihilated, it is very evident that, though our mind itself were to continue endowed with all its present susceptibilities, it never again could behold the sun, around whose cold and gloomy mass our earth might still revolve as now; nor, in such circumstances, is there any reason to suppose that it would exist in any one of those various states which constitute the delightful sensations of vision. These sensations, then, depend on external things, as much as on the mind itself. But though, after we have once been enriched with the splendid acquisitions which

our perceptive organs afford us, everything external were to vanish, not from our sight merely, but from all our senses, and our mind alone were to exist in the infinity of space, together with that Eternal Majesty which formed it,—still thought after thought, and feeling after feeling, would arise, as it were, spontaneously, in the disembodied spirit, if no change in its nature were to take place; and the whole world of light and fragrance, and harmony, would, in its remembrance, almost rise again, as if outliving annihilation itself. It is by this capacity of internal change of state, indeed, that the soul is truly immortal, which, if it were capable of no affections but those which I have termed external, would itself be virtually as mortal as all the mortal things that are around it; since, but for them, as causes of its feelings, it could not, in these circumstances of complete dependence, have any feelings whatever, and could, therefore, exist only in that state of original insensibility which preceded the first sensation that gave it consciousness of existence. It is, in the true sense of immortality of life, immortal, only because it depends for its feelings, as well as for its mere existence, not on the state of perishable things, which are but the atmosphere that floats around it, but on its own independent laws; or, at least,—for the laws of mind, as well as the laws of matter, can mean nothing more,—depends for the successions of its feelings only on the provident arrangements of that all-foreseeing Power, whose will, as it existed at the very moment at which it called everything from nothing, and gave to mind and matter their powers and susceptibilities, is thus, consequently, in the whole series of effects, from age to age, the eternal legislation of the universe.

Even while our soul is united to this bodily frame,



and continually capable of being affected by the objects that are continually present with it, by far the greater number of our feelings are those which arise from our internal successions of thought. Innumerable as our perceptions are, they are but a small part of the varied consciousness of a day. We do not see or feel objects merely,—for this alone would be of little value; but we compare them with each other—we form plans of action, and prosecute them with assiduous attention, or we meditate on the means by which they may most effectually be prosecuted; and with all our perceptions of external things, and plans of serious thought, a continued fairy-work of involuntary fancy is incessantly mingling, in consequence of the laws of suggestion in the mind itself, like the transient shadows on a stream, of the clouds that flit over it, which picture on it their momentary forms, as they pass in rapid variety, without affecting the course of the busy current, which glides along in its majestic track, as if they had never been. If we had the power of external sense only, life would be as passive as the most unconnected dream, or rather far more passive and irregular than the wildest of our dreams. Our remembrances, comparisons, our hopes, our fears, and all the variety of our thoughts and emotions, give a harmony and unity to our general consciousness, which make the consciousness of each day a little drama, or a connected part of that still greater drama, which is to end only with the death of its hero, or rather with the commencement of his glorious apotheosis.

How wide a field the internal affections of the mind present, without dependence on the system of material things,—with which we are connected, indeed, by many delightful ties, but by ties that have relation

only to this mortal scene,—is proved in a very striking manner, by the increased energy of thought which we often seem to acquire in those hours of the quiet of the night, when every external influence is nearly excluded,—the hours of inward meditation, in which the mind has been poetically said to retire into the sanctuary of its own immense abode, and to feel there and enjoy its spiritual infinity, as if admitted to the ethereal dwellings and the feasts of the gods.

“Nonne vides, quoties nox circumfunditur atra  
 Immensi terga Oceani terramque polumque,  
 Cum rerum obduxit species obnubilus Aer  
 Nec fragor impulsas aut vox allabitur aures,  
 Ut nullo intuitu mens jam defixa, recedit  
 In sese, et vires intra se colligit omnes?  
 Ut magno hospitio potitur, seque excipit ipsa  
 Totam, intus; seu jussa Deum discumbere mensis.  
 Nam neque sic illam solido de marmore tecta  
 Nec cum porticibus capiunt laquaria centum  
 Aurea, tot distincta locis, tot regibus apta,  
 Quesitæque epulae, Tyrioque instructus ab ostro:  
 Ut gaudet sibi juncta, sibique intenditur ipsa,  
 Ipsa sibi tota incumbens, totamque pererrans  
 Immensa immensam spatio longèque patentem.  
 Seu dulces inter latebras Heliconis amœni,  
 Et sacrum Phœbi nemorum divertitur umbram,  
 Fœcundum pleno exercens sub pectore numen;  
 Seu causas rerum occultas, et semina volvit,  
 Et quæis fœderibus conspirent maximus Æther  
 Neptunusque Pater, Tellusque, atque omnia gignant;  
 Sive altum virtutis iter subducit, et almus  
 Molitur leges, quæis fortunata juvenus  
 Parent, ac pace imperium tutetur et armis.”<sup>1</sup>

The internal states of mind, then, which form the class next to be considered by us, present to our inquiry no narrow or uninteresting field. We are to find in these again everything, though in fainter

<sup>1</sup> Heinsius, *De Contemptu Mortis*, Lib. i.

colours, which delighted and interested us in the former class; while we are, at the same time, to discover an abundant source of feelings still more delightful and sublime in themselves, and still more interesting to our analysis. We are no longer mere sensitive beings, that gaze upon the universe, and feel pain or pleasure as a few of its elementary particles touch our nerves. We are the discoverers of laws, which every element of the universe obeys,—the tracers of events of ages that are past,—the calculators and prophets of events, that are not to occur till generation after generation of the prophetic calculators that succeed us shall themselves have passed away;—and, while we are thus able to discover the innumerable relations of created things, we are, at the same time, by the medium of these internal states of our own mind, the discoverers also of that Infinite Being, who formed everything which it is our glory to be capable merely of observing, and who, without acting directly on any of our organs of sense, is yet present to our intellect with as bright a reality of perception, as the suns and planets which he has formed are present to our corporeal vision.

The species of philosophical inquiry, which our internal affections of mind admit, is exactly the same as that which our external affections admit; that is to say, we are, in our inquiry, to consider the circumstances in which they arise, and the circumstances which follow them, with the relations which they appear to us mutually to bear to our external feelings, and to each other, and nothing more. It is as little possible for us, independently of experience, to discover, *a priori*, any reason that one state of mind should be followed directly by another state of mind, as, in the case of our external feelings, to discover any



reason that the presence of light should be followed by that particular mental state which constitutes the sensation of colour, not by that which constitutes the perception of the song of a nightingale, or the fragrance of a violet, or that those external causes should be followed by their peculiar sensations rather than by the perception of colour. It is equally vain for us to think of discovering any reason in the nature of the mind itself, which could have enabled us to predict, without actual experience, or, at least, without analogy of other similar instances, any of the mere intellectual changes of state, that the sight of an object, which we have seen before in other circumstances, should recall, by instant spontaneous suggestion, those other circumstances which exist no longer; that in meeting, in the most distant country, a native of our own land, it should be in our power, by a single word, to annihilate, as it were, for the moment, all the seas and mountains between him and his home; or, in the depth of the most gloomy dungeon, where its wretched tenant, who has been its tenant for half a life, sees, and scarcely sees, the few faint rays that serve but to speak of a sunshine, which he is not to enjoy, and which they deprive him of the comfort of forgetting, and to render visible to his very eyes that wretchedness which he feels at his heart, that even this creature of misery,—whom no one in the world perhaps remembers but the single being, whose regular presence, at the hour at which he gives him, day by day, the means of adding to his life another year of wretchedness like the past, is scarcely felt as the presence of another living thing,—should yet, by the influence of a single thought, enter into the instant possession of a freedom, beyond that which the mere destruction of his dungeon could give,—a freedom

which restores him not merely to the liberty, but to the very years which he had lost,—to the woods, and the brook, and the fields of his boyish frolics, and to all the happy faces which were only as happy as his own. The innumerable examples of such successions of thought we know from experience, but from experience only. It is enough for us, however, to ascertain the simple fact, that the internal suggestions of thought after thought, without the recurrence of any external object, does take place, as truly as sensation itself, when external objects recur,—to observe the general circumstances relating to the suggestion,—and to arrange the principle on which it seems to depend, as a principle of our intellectual constitution. While we attempt no more than this, we are certain at least that we are not attempting anything which is beyond the sphere of human exertion. To attempt more, and to strive to discover, in any one of the series of our internal feelings, some reason which might have led us originally to predict its existence, or the existence of the other mental affections which succeed it, would be to hope to discover, what is not merely beyond our power even to divine, but what we should be incapable of knowing that we had divined, even though we should casually have succeeded in making the discovery.

In the classification of our internal feelings, as in every classification, and, indeed in everything, intellectual or moral, which can exercise us, it is evident that we may err in two ways, by excess or deficiency. We may multiply divisions without necessity, or we may labour in vain to force into one division individual diversities, which cannot, by any labour, be made to correspond. The golden mean, of which moralists

speak, is as important in science as in our practical views of happiness; and the habit of this cautious speculative moderation is probably of as difficult attainment in the one, as the habitual contentment which is necessary to the enjoyment of the other.

When we think of the infinite variety of the physical objects around us, and of the small number of classes in which they are at present arranged, it would seem to us, if we were ignorant of the history of philosophy, that the regular progress of classification must have been to simplify more and more the general circumstances of agreement on which arrangement depends; that, in this progressive simplification, millions of diversities must have been originally reduced to thousands, these afterwards to hundreds, and these again, successively, to divisions still more minute. But the truth is, that this simplicity of division is far from being so progressive in the arrangement even of external things. The first steps of classification must indeed uniformly be, to reduce the great multitude of obvious diversities to some less extensive tribes. But the mere guess-work of hypothesis soon comes in to supply the place of laborious observation or experiment, and of that slow and accurate reasoning on observations and experiments which, to minds of very rapid imagination, is perhaps a labour as wearisome as, in the long observation itself, to watch for hours, with an eye fixed like the telescope through which it gazes, one constant point of the heavens, or to minister to the furnace, and hang over it in painful expectance of the transmutations, which it tardily presents. By the unlimited power of an hypothesis, we in a moment range together, under one general name, myriads of diversities the most obstinately discordant; as if the mere giving of a name could of itself alter the qualities



of things, making similar what was dissimilar before, like words of magic, that convert anything into anything. When the hypothesis is proved to be false, the temporary magic of the spell is of course dissolved, and all the original diversities appear again to be ranged once more in a wider variety of classes. Even where, without any such guess-work of hypothetical resemblance, divisions and arrangements have been formed on the justest principles, according to the qualities of objects known at the time, some new observation or new experiment is continually showing differences of composition or of general qualities where none were conceived before; and the same philosophy is thus, at the same moment, employed in uniting and disuniting, in reducing many objects to a few, and separating a few into many; as the same electric power, at the moment in which it is attracting objects nearer to it, repels others which were almost in contiguity, and often brings the same object close to it, only to throw it off the next moment to a greater distance. While a nicer artificial analysis, or more accurate observation, is detecting unsuspected resemblances, and, still more frequently, unsuspected diversities, there is hence no fixed point nor regular advance, but a sort of ebb and flow of wider and narrower divisions and subdivisions; and the classes of an intervening age may be fewer than the classes both of the age which preceded it and of that which comes after it. For a very striking example of this alternation, I may refer to the history of that science which is to matter what our intellectual analysis is to mind. The elements of bodies have been more and fewer successively, varying with the analyses of almost every distinguished chemist: far from having fewer principles of bodies, as chemistry advances, how many more elements have

we now than in the days of Aristotle! There can be no question, that when man first looked around him with a philosophic eye, and saw, in the sublime rudeness of nature, something more than objects of savage rapacity, or still more savage indifference, he must have conceived the varieties of bodies to be innumerable, and could as little have thought of comprehending them all under a few simple names, as of comprehending the whole earth itself within his narrow grasp. In a short time, however, this narrow grasp, if I may venture so to express myself, did strive to comprehend the whole earth; and soon after man had made the first great advance in science, of wondering at the infinity of things in which he was lost, we had sages, such as Thales, Anaximenes, and Heraclitus, who were forming everything of a single principle,—water, or air, or fire. The four elements, which afterwards reigned so long in the schools of physics, gave place to a single principle with the alchemists; or to three principles,—salt, sulphur, and mercury—with chemists less bold in conjecture. These, again, were soon multiplied by observers of still nicer discrimination; and modern chemistry, while it has shown some bodies, which we regarded as different, to be composed of the same elements, has at the same time shown, that what we regarded as elements are themselves compounds of elements which we knew not before.

To him who looks back on the history of our own science, the analytic science of mind, which, as I have already said, may almost be regarded, in its most important aspects, as a sort of intellectual chemistry, there will appear the same alternate widening and narrowing of classification. The mental phenomena are, in one age or country, of many classes; in a succeeding age, or in a different country, they are of

fewer; and again, after the lapse of another age, or the passage of a river or a mountain, they are of many more. In our own island, after the decay of scholastic metaphysics, from Hobbes to Hume,—if I may use these names, as dates of eras, in a science, on which, with all their unfortunate errors on many of the most important points of human belief, they both unquestionably threw a degree of light, which rendered their errors on these subjects the more to be lamented,—in this long and brilliant period, which, of course, includes, with many other eminent names, the very eminent author of the *Essay on the Human Understanding*, there was a tendency to simplify, as much as possible, the classification of the phenomena of mind; and more regard, perhaps, was paid to the similarities of phenomena, than to their differences. Subsequently to this period, however, the philosophy of Dr Reid, and, in general, of the metaphysicians of this part of the island, has had the opposite tendency; to enlarge, as I conceive, far beyond what was necessary, the number of classes which they considered as too limited before; and, in proportion, more regard has perhaps been paid to the differences, or supposed differences of phenomena, than to their resemblances. There can be no doubt, at least, that we are now accustomed to speak of more powers or operations of the mind, than even the schoolmen themselves, fond as they were of all the nicest subtilties of infinitesimal subdivision.

The difference in this respect, however, is not so striking, when we consider successions of ages, in which, of course, from our general notion of the effects of time, we are accustomed to expect variety, as when we look to neighbouring countries at the same period, especially if we consider the advantage



of that noble art, which might have been supposed, by the wide diffusion which it gives to opinion, to have removed, as to human sentiment, all the boundaries of mere geographic distance. Slight, however, as the distance is which separates the two countries, the philosophy of France, in its views of the phenomena of mind, and the philosophy of Britain, particularly of this part of Britain, have for more than half a century differed as much as the philosophy of different ages; certainly in a degree far greater than, but for experience, it would have been easy for us to suppose. In France, all the phenomena of mind have been, during that period, regarded as sensations, or transformed sensations, that is to say, as sensations variously simplified or combined. The works of Condillac, who professed to have founded his system on that of Locke, but who evidently did not understand fully what Locke intended, gave the principal tone to this philosophic belief; and it has been fostered since by that passion for the simple and the wonderful, which, when these two objects can be united, is perhaps the strongest of all our intellectual passions. In the system of the French metaphysicians, they are united in a very high degree. That this universal presence of sensation, whether true or false, is at least very simple, cannot be denied; and there is certainly abundant matter of wonder in the supposed discovery, that all the variety of our internal feelings are those very feelings of a different class, to which they have so little appearance of belonging. It is a sort of perpetual masquerade, in which we enjoy the pleasure of recognising a familiar friend in a variety of grotesque dresses, and the pleasure also of enjoying the mistakes of those around us, who take him for a different person, merely because he has changed his robe and his

mask. The fallacy of the doctrine is precisely of that kind, which, if once admitted, is most difficult to be shaken off. It relates to a system which is very simple, very wonderful, and obviously true in part. Indeed, when there are so many actual transformations of our feelings, so many emotions, of which the principal elements are so little recognisable, in the complex affection that results from them, the supposition that all the varieties of our consciousness may be only modes of one simple class of primary feelings, false as it is, is far from being the most striking example which the history of our science presents of the extravagance of philosophic conjecture.

The speculations of the French school of philosophers, to which I have now alluded, as to the supposed universal transmutations of feeling, bear, as you can scarcely fail to have remarked, a very obvious resemblance, in extreme simplicity, to the speculations of the alchemists on transmutations of another kind. The resemblance is stated with great force by a living French author, himself a metaphysician of no humble rank. I allude to a passage which you will find quoted by Mr Stewart, in one of the valuable preliminary dissertations of his volume of *Essays*, from a work of De Gerando.

"It required nothing less," says this ingenious writer, "than the united splendour of the discoveries brought to light by the new chemical school, to tear the minds of men from the pursuit of a simple and primary element; a pursuit renewed in every age, with an indefatigable perseverance, and always renewed in vain. With what feelings of contempt would the physiologists of former times have looked down on the chemists of the present age, whose timid and circumscribed system admits nearly forty different prin-

ciples in the composition of bodies! What a subject of ridicule would the new nomenclature have afforded to an alchemist!

"The Philosophy of Mind has its alchemists also; men whose studies are directed to the pursuit of one single principle, into which the whole science may be resolved; and who flatter themselves with the hope of discovering the grand secret, by which the pure gold of truth may be produced at pleasure."<sup>1</sup>

This secret of the intellectual *opus magnum*, Condillac conceived himself to have found; or, rather, as I have already said, he ascribed the grand discovery to our own illustrious countryman. In this reference the whole school of French metaphysicians have very strangely agreed; conferring on Mr Locke a praise which they truly meant to do him honour, but praise which the object of it would have hastened to disclaim. He certainly was not that alchemist in the science of mind which they conceived him to be, though he was a chemist in it, unquestionably, and a chemist of the highest rank.

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### LECTURE XXXIII.

*On the Classification of the Mental Phenomena, by Locke—by Condillac—by Reid—a New Classification.*

GENTLEMEN, in the conclusion of my last Lecture, I alluded to the system of the French metaphysicians, as an instance of error from extreme simplification in the analysis of that class of our feelings which we are now considering.

Of this system, which deserves some fuller notice,

<sup>1</sup> Chap. I. sect. ii. pp. 15, 16. 4to edit.



on account both of the great talents which have stated and defended it, and of its very wide diffusion, I may remark, in the first place, that it is far from being, what its author and his followers consider it to be, a mere development of the system of our illustrious countryman. On the contrary, they agree with Locke only in one point, and that a negative one, as to which all philosophers may now be considered as unanimous, the denial of what were termed innate ideas. In everything which can be strictly said to be positive in his system, this great philosopher is nearly as completely opposed to Condillac and his followers, as to the unintelligible wranglers of the ancient schools. To convince you of this, a very slight statement of the two systems will be sufficient.

According to Locke, the mind, to whose existence thought or feeling is not essential, might, but for sensation, have remained for ever without feeling of any kind. From sensation we acquire our first *ideas*, to use a word which, from its ambiguity, I am not very fond of using, but which, from its constant occurrence, is a very important one in his system. These ideas we cannot merely remember as past, and compound or decompound them in various ways, but we can compare them in all their variety of relations; and, according as their objects are agreeable or disagreeable, can love or hate those objects, and fear or hope their return. We remember not external things only, so as to have ideas of them, ideas of sensation, but we remember also our very remembrance itself; our abstractions, comparisons, love, hate, hope, fear, and all the varieties of reflex thought or feeling; and our remembrance of these internal feelings, or operations of our mind, furnishes another abundant source of ideas, which he terms ideas of reflection. The comparison,

however,—and it is this point alone which can be of any consequence in reference to the French system,—the comparison, as a state of the mind, even when it is exercised on our sensations or perceptions, is not itself a sensation or perception; nor is our hope, or fear, or any other of our reflex feelings; for then, instead of the two sources of our ideas, the distinction of which forms the very groundwork of the *Essay on the Human Understanding*, we should truly have but one source, and our ideas of reflection would themselves be the very ideas of sensation to which they are opposed. Our sensations, indeed, directly or indirectly, give rise to our reflex feelings, but they do not involve them; they are only prior in order, the occasions on which certain powers or susceptibilities of feeling in the mind evolve themselves.

Such is the system of Locke on those very points, on which the French philosophers most strangely profess to regard him as their great authority. But it is surely very different from the system which they affect to found on it. According to them, sensation is not merely that primary affection of mind which gives occasion to our other feelings, but is itself, as variously composed or decomposed, all the variety of our feelings. “If we consider,” says Condillac, in a paragraph which may be said to contain a summary of his whole doctrine with respect to the mind—“if we consider that to remember, to compare, to judge, to distinguish, to imagine, to be astonished, to have abstract ideas, to have ideas of number and duration, to know truths, whether general or particular, are but so many modes of being attentive; that to have passions, to love, to hate, to hope, to fear, to will, are but so many different modes of desire; and that attention in the one case, and desire in the other case,

of which all these feelings are modes, are themselves, in their origin, nothing more than modes of sensation, we cannot but conclude, that sensation involves in itself—*enveloppe*—all the faculties of the soul.<sup>1</sup>

Whatever we may think of this doctrine, as true or false, ingenious or absurd, it seems, at least, scarcely possible that we should regard it as the doctrine of Locke—of him who sets out with a primary division of our ideas into two distinct classes, one class of which alone belongs to sensation; and who considers even this class of our mere ideas not as involving all the operations of the mind with respect to them, but only as the objects of the mind in these various operations; as being what we compare, not the very feeling of our comparison itself, the inducements to passion, not what constitutes any of our passions, as a state, or series of states of the mind. To render the paragraph which I have quoted from Condillac at all accordant with the real doctrine of Locke, it would be necessary to reverse it in almost every proposition which it involves.

The doctrine then, as exhibited by Condillac and his followers, whatever merit it may have in itself, or however void it may be of merit of any kind, is not the doctrine of him from whom it is said to be derived. But its agreement or disagreement with the system of any other philosopher is, comparatively, of very little consequence. The great question is, whether it be just—whether it truly have the merit of presenting a faithful picture of the mental phenomena, which it professes to develop to us more clearly.

Have we reason to believe, then, that all the various feelings of our mind, which form the classification of

<sup>1</sup> *Traité des Sensations*, Part I. chap. vii. sect. 2.



the internal affections, are merely, to use Condillac's phrase, transformed sensations:

Transformed sensations. It is evident, on its own principles, though the phrase might seem vague and ambiguous in any other system, can mean nothing more than sensations more or less lively, or more or less complex. It cannot signify anything that is absolutely different or superadded: for, if there be anything in any complex feeling of the mind which did not originally form a sensation, or a part of a complex sensation, this addition, however slight, is itself a proof that all the phenomena of the mind are not mere sensations variously repeated: ~~that sensation~~, in short, does not involve "all the affections and faculties of the soul."

Is every feeling, then, in the whole series of our varied consciousness, referable, in all its parts, to sensation, as its original source? Not its source merely, in the very evident respect, is that which is, in order really primary to all our other feelings, but as that which essentially constitutes them all,—in the same manner as the waters of the fountain are afterwards the very waters which flow along the mead.

To prove the affirmative of this, it is astonishing with what readiness Condillac—who is generally regarded as a nice and subtle reasoner, and who certainly, as his work on that subject shows, had studied with attention the great principles of logic—passes from faculty to faculty, and from emotion to emotion, professing to find sensation everywhere, without exhibiting to us even the semblance of what he seeks, and yet repeating the constant affirmation that he has found it,—as if the frequent repetition were itself a proof of what is frequently repeated,—but proving only that the various feelings of the mind agree, as

might be supposed, in being feelings of the mind; not that they agree in being sensations, as that word is used by himself, and as it is, in common philosophic use, distinguished from the other more general term. Except the mere frequency of the affirmation, and the unquestionable priority in order of time, of our sensations to our other feelings,—there is not the slightest evidence, in his system, of that universal transmutation which it affirms.

It may be necessary to mention, that, in these remarks on the system of the illustrious preceptor of the Prince of Parma, I allude, in particular, to his Treatise "*Of Sensations*," which contains his more mature opinions on the subject—not to his earlier work, *On the Origin of Human Knowledge*, in which he has not ventured on so bold a simplification; or, at least, has not expressed it in language so precise.

The great error of Condillac, as it appears to me, consists in supposing, that, when he has shown the circumstance from which any effect *results*, he has shown this result to be essentially the *same* with the circumstance which produced it.

Certain sensations have ceased to exist, certain other feelings have immediately arisen; these new feelings are therefore the others, under another shape. Such is the secret, but very false logic, which seems to pervade his whole doctrine on the subject.

If all that is meant were merely, that whatever may be the varying feelings of the mind, the mind itself, in all this variety, when it remembers or compares, hates or loves, is still the same substance, as that which saw, heard, smelled, tasted, touched, there could be nothing objectionable in the doctrine, but there would then certainly be nothing new in it: and, instead of thinking either of Locke or of Condillac,

we might think at pleasure in stating such a doctrine of any of the innumerable assertors of the spirituality of the thinking principle. Such, however, is not the meaning of the French metaphysician. He asserts this identity of substance, indeed, like the philosophers who preceded him, but he asserts still more. It is not the permanent substance *mind* only which is the same. Its affections or states, which seem, in many respects, absolutely different, are the same as those very affections or states, from which they seem to differ; and are the same, merely because they have succeeded them: for, as I have already said, except the frequency of his affirmation, that they are the same, there is no other evidence but that of the mere succession in order of time, by which he attempts to substantiate their sameness.

The origin of this false reasoning I conceive to be the analogy of *matter*, to which his system, by reducing all the affections of mind to that class which is immediately connected with external things, must have led him to pay peculiar attention. Yet, in justice to him, I must remark, that, although a system which reduces every feeling to mere sensation, and consequently connects every feeling, in its origin, with the qualities of matter, must be favourable to materialism, and has unquestionably fostered this, in a very high degree, in the French school of metaphysics, there is no reason to consider Condillac himself as a materialist; on the contrary, his works contain many very just remarks on the errors of materialism. But still his system, as I have said, by leading him continually to our organs of sense, and to the objects which act upon them, must have rendered the phenomena of matter peculiarly apt to recur to his mind in all its speculations. Now, in matter, there can be no



question as to the reality of that transmutation, which, as applied to mind, forms the chief principle of his intellectual analysis. In the chemistry of the material elements, the compounds are the very elements themselves. When any two substances, present together, vanish as it were from our view, and a third substance, whether like or unlike to either of the former, presents itself in their place, we believe this third substance, however dissimilar it may appear, to be only the co-existence of the two others: and, indeed, since we have no reason to believe that any change takes place in the number of the corpuscles of which our planet is composed, the whole series of its corpuscular changes can be only new combinations of articles that existed before.

The doctrine of Pythagoras, in its application to the material world, is in this respect philosophically accurate:—

Tempus edax rerum, tuque invidiosa vetustas

Omnia destruitis, vitiataque dentibus ævi

Paulatim lentâ consumitis omnia morte.

Nec species sua cuique manet; rerumque novatrix

Ex aliis alias reparat natura figuras.

Nec perit in toto quicquam, mihi credite, mundo.

Sed variat faciemque novat; *nascique* vocatur

Incipere esse aliud quàm quod fuit antè,—*morique*

Desinere illud idem. Cùm sint hùc forsitan illa,

Hæc translata illùc, summa tamen omnia constant.<sup>1</sup>

With respect to the mere elements of matter, therefore, the present may be said, and truly said, to be exactly the past; and, in the whole series of phenomena of the material universe, from the moment of its creation to this present moment, there has been nothing new, but mere changes of relative position. This absolute sameness of result, in all the apparent

<sup>1</sup> Ovid. *Metamorph.* Lib. XV. v. 234-6, and 252-8.

changes of matter, Condillac applies, by a most unwarrantable extension, to the mere affections of the mind; and because two affections of mind are followed by a third, he considers this third to be the two former co-existing, or, as he terms it, transformed. The feeling which follows another feeling, however seemingly different, is thus, in his system, the same, because it results from it; and it is very easy for him, in this way, to prove all our feelings to be sensations, by this simplest of arguments,—that sensation was the first state induced in mind; and that, hence, since all our other feelings, of every species, must have followed it, they must have originated in it, and, therefore, been this very sensation under a mere change of form. It is number one of the long series; and, if number two be a transformed sensation, because it results from number one, which was a sensation, number three must be equally so, because it follows number two; and thus, successively, the whole series. I perceive a horse; I perceive a sheep: each of these separate states of my mind is a sensation. I cannot attend to them long, he says, without comparing them, and perceiving those circumstances of agreement which lead me to apply to both the word quadruped. All this is most indubitably true. It is impossible, or, at least, it is not very common for us to observe any two animals long together, without thinking of some of the circumstances in which they agree or differ. The one state of mind is a consequence of the other state of mind. But this is far from proving the comparison itself, as a subsequent state or phenomenon of the mind, to be the same mental state as the mere perception of the two animals which simply preceded it. If the evidence of our consciousness is to be trusted, it is very

different; and on what other evidence can the assertion of their sameness be founded? We do not feel the state of mind which constitutes the comparison, to be virtually equal to the two states of mind which constituted the separate perceptions, as we feel the relation of virtual equality between our notion of the number eight, and our notions of six and two combined; the one feeling does not virtually comprehend the two others, and it surely does not comprehend them in any grosser physical sense: for there certainly is nothing in the absolute spiritual unity of our thinking principle which can lead us to believe, that the state or affection of mind which constitutes the perception of a horse, and the state or affection of mind which constitutes the perception of a sheep, unite in that different state or affection of mind which constitutes the comparison of the two, in the same manner as the solid crystals of any salt unite, in solution, with the liquid which dissolves them. They do not involve or constitute, they merely give occasion to this third state, and give occasion to it merely in consequence of the peculiar susceptibilities of the mind itself, as formed, by its divine Author, to be affected in this particular manner, after being affected in those different manners which constitute the separate perceptions, as sensation itself, the primary feeling, was made to depend on some previous organic affection produced by an external object. It is not, therefore, as being susceptible of mere sensation, but as being susceptible of more than mere sensation, that the mind is able to compare its sensations with each other. We may see, and certainly do see, objects together, without forming uniformly the same comparison; which could not be the case if the mere co-existence of the two perceptions constituted or in-



volved the comparison itself. In the case of a horse and sheep, for example, though these, in the sensations which they excite, cannot, at different times, be very different, we compare, at different times, their colour, their forms, their magnitudes, their functions, and the uses to which we put them, and we consider them as related in various other ways. The perceptions being the same, the comparisons, or subsequent feelings of relation, are different; and though the relation cannot be felt but when both objects are considered together, it is truly no part of the perception of each. According to the French system, the science, which we now strangely regard as of difficult acquirement, would be nothing more than the mere opening of our eyes. Were we to show to a peasant, absolutely unacquainted with the very elements of geometry, diagrams representing two right angles and a plane triangle, he might certainly, though he could not give them names, perceive these figures as clearly as the most expert mathematician. Everything which mere sensation could produce, in this case, would be the same in both; and nothing can be added to this primary sensation, since everything is said to be actually involved in the sensation itself. Yet, with all his accurate perception of the figures, however clear, and vivid, and lasting, the peasant would not find, in this immediate perception, the equality of the two right angles taken together to the three angles of the triangle, or any other geometrical relation. The comparison, then, and the belief of an universal truth of proportion, which results from that comparison, are certainly something more than the mere sensation itself. They are, in short, new states of mind, as distinct from the mere perception of the figures in the diagram, as the perception of a circle itself differs

from the perception of a square. To compare one animal with another, is, indeed, to have different visual images, but the mere co-existence of visual images is only a group, larger or smaller as the images are more or fewer; and all which transformation can do is to add to this group or take away from it. Innumerable objects may be, and are continually present to us at once, so as to produce one complex affection of mind, fields, groves, mountains, streams; but the mere co-existence of these, so as to form in our thought one scene, involves no feeling of comparison; and if the mind had not been susceptible of other affections than those of sense, or of mere remembrance of the past objects of sense, either in whole or in part, it might, when such a scene was present, have existed for ever in the state which forms the complex perception of the scene, without the slightest notion of the relation of its parts to the whole, or to each other.

When I thus attempt to prove by so many wearying arguments, that the feeling which constitutes our comparison of our sensations, or, in other words, our belief of their agreement or disagreement, is itself a state of mind different from either of the separate sensations which we compare, and different from both, as merely co-existing, I cannot but feel, what many of you have probably felt already, as if I were labouring to demonstrate a mere truism. Indeed, when I consider the argument as anything more, it is necessary for me to call to mind the great name and great talents of the author whose system I oppose, the praise which the system has received, of extreme subtilty of analysis, combined with extreme simplicity, and its wide diffusion, as the universal, or nearly universal, metaphysical creed of one of the most enlightened nations of Europe.

But for these remembrances, I must confess that the system, which supposes our comparison to be the ideas compared, and nothing more, as if these had flowed together into one, would appear to me to correspond almost exactly with an ironical theory of the same process, and, indeed, of all the intellectual processes, proposed in our own country,—not in the *Essay on the Human Understanding*, but in a very different work,—a theory which supposes comparison, or judgment, to be only the conflux of two ideas, in one propositional canal.

“Simple ideas are produced by the motion of the spirits in one simple canal: when two of these canals disembody themselves into one, they make what we call a proposition; and when two of these propositional channels empty themselves into a third, they form a syllogism, or a ratiocination. Memory is performed in a distinct apartment of the brain, made up of vessels similar, and like situated to the ideal, propositional, and syllogistical vessels, in the primary parts of the brain. After the same manner, it is easy to explain the other modes of thinking; as also why some people think so wrong and perversely, which proceeds from the bad configuration of those glands. Some, for example, are born without the propositional or syllogistical canals; in others, that reason ill, they are of unequal capacities; in dull fellows, of too great a length, whereby the motion of the spirits is retarded; in trifling geniuses, weak and small; in the over-refining spirits, too much intorted and winding; and so of the rest.”<sup>1</sup>

In examining the system of Condillac, which must certainly be allowed to bear a considerable resemblance to this system, I have instanced the feeling of

<sup>1</sup> Mart. Scrib. c. xii.



relation in comparison, merely as being one of the simplest examples which I could select. I might, with equal reason, have instanced other states of mind ; in particular, all the variety of our emotions,—astonishment or desire, for example, which are as little sensations, in the philosophical meaning of the term, as they are fear or sorrow. The feeling of pleasure, in all its degrees of vividness or faintness, is a state of mind very different from that which constitutes desire of the recurrence of its object ; for, otherwise, the desire would be itself the very gratification which it supposes to be absent. It is induced, indeed, by the remembrance of the pleasure ; but it is a consequence of the remembrance, not a part of it. It is like that general activity of life, to which, amid the mild breathings of spring, the torpid animal awakes, that, in continual winter, would have slumbered for ever in insensibility ; or like the bud, which, without warmth and moisture, never could have burst from the leafless stem ; but which is still, in itself, something very different from the sunshine and the shower.

It seems to me not improbable, that the error of Condillac, and of the other French metaphysicians who have adopted his leading doctrine, may have arisen in part, or at least may have escaped detection more readily, from the ambiguous signification of the word *sentir*, which is a verb originally, indeed, and strictly expressive of mere sensation ; but applied also, by a sort of metaphorical extension, to our emotions and other affections of mind, that do not originate directly like sensation, in an external cause. Though this mere arbitrary word, however, may be applicable to a variety of feelings, it does not therefore follow that these are all modifications of that small class of feelings, to which the word was, in its primary sense,

confined,—any more than from the still wider use, in our language, of the term feeling, as applicable to all the states of the mind, it would follow that these are all modes of affection of our sense of touch. Still, however, I cannot but think, that, if the term *sensir* had been of less vague application, a mind so acute as that of Condillac could not have failed to discover, in the imaginary proof which he offers of the intellectual transmutations of his simple and universal principle, those unwarrantable assumptions, which, even to humbler minds, seem so obvious as scarcely to require, for the detection of them, many moments of thought.

These observations, I flatter myself, have shown sufficiently the error of the system, which would convert all our feelings into sensations, in some indescribable state of metamorphosis. The system, I confess, appears to me a very striking example of an extreme, into which we are more apt to fall, from the very false notion, that it is characteristic of philosophic genius—the extreme of excessive simplification,—which is evil, not merely as being false in itself, but I may remark also, as being productive of the very confusion to which simplicity is supposed to be adverse. When we think of love or hate, fear or hope, as fundamentally and truly nothing more than affections of external sense, we try to recognise the original sensations of smell, taste, hearing, touch, and sight, which have been transformed into them; but we try in vain to recognise what is essentially different, and lose ourselves therefore in the attempt. We perceive everything, as it were, through a mist, which it is impossible for our vision to penetrate, and we are at least as much perplexed by having only one object to seek amid the multitude, as if we considered all the phenomena of mind without any classification whatever.

Before closing this slight review of the theory of transformed sensations, I must remark, that, even though it were strictly true, that all the feelings of the mind, if considered simply as feelings of the mind, are mere sensations varied or transformed by some strange internal process, undescribed and indescribable, still, in conformity with every just principle of philosophizing, it would be necessary to form two classes of these mental phenomena, corresponding with the primary classification which we have made of them. That the mind should begin immediately to exist in a certain state, in consequence of the presence of external objects, so that it would not, at that moment, have existed in that state but for the presence of the external object, is a proof of one set of laws, which connect mind directly and immediately with matter. That it should afterwards begin to exist in a similar state, without the recurrence of any external cause whatever, in consequence of its own susceptibilities only, is a proof of another set of laws peculiar to the mind itself. The complete difference of the cause, in the two instances, would justify, or rather require a different arrangement of the effect; as when the same motion of a piece of iron is produced at one time by impulse, at another by the presence of a magnet, at another by its mere gravity, we consider the motion, though itself the same in velocity and direction, as referable to different physical powers. With the same states of mind variously produced, we should still have to speak of external and internal mental susceptibilities of affection, as, with the same motions of a piece of iron variously produced, we speak of magnetism, impulse, gravitation.

The very celebrated system which I have now been combating,—a system, which, by the universality of



CONSCIOUSNESS

Consciousness is the state of being aware of one's own existence and the world around one. It is the faculty by which we perceive and understand our surroundings. Consciousness is not a static state but a dynamic process that changes as we experience the world. It is the bridge between the internal world of thoughts and feelings and the external world of objects and events. Consciousness allows us to reflect on our experiences and make sense of them. It is the source of our self-awareness and the foundation of our identity. Without consciousness, we would be mere automatons, reacting to stimuli without understanding or feeling. Consciousness is what makes us human and gives us the ability to live meaningful lives.

Consciousness is a complex phenomenon that has fascinated philosophers, scientists, and psychologists for centuries. It is the only thing we are directly aware of, yet it remains one of the most mysterious aspects of the human mind. Some believe that consciousness is a product of the brain, while others believe it is a separate entity. The debate continues, but one thing is clear: consciousness is essential to our existence. It is the light that illuminates our lives and gives them meaning. Without it, the world would be a dark and meaningless void. Consciousness is the gift of God that allows us to see the beauty and wonder of the world and to love it with all our heart, mind, and strength.

Consciousness is the power of the mind to be self-aware and to reflect on its own processes. It is the ability to think about one's own thoughts and feelings. This self-reflection is what allows us to grow and change. We can see our mistakes and learn from them. We can understand our strengths and weaknesses and work to improve ourselves. Consciousness is the source of our moral and ethical decisions. It is what allows us to distinguish between right and wrong and to act accordingly. Without consciousness, we would be lost in a sea of instinct and emotion, unable to make sense of our lives or the lives of others. Consciousness is the light that guides us through the darkness of the unknown and the power that gives us the ability to create a better world for ourselves and for others.

indicative of a peculiar susceptibility of being affected in that particular manner; and that the mind has, therefore, truly, as many susceptibilities, as, in various circumstances, it can have different feelings. But still, when we arrange these different phenomena in certain classes, it is an error in classification to give a new name to varieties that can be referred to other parts of the division already made; and it is on this account I object to the unnecessary amplification of our intellectual systems, in arranging the phenomena of mind under so many powers as those of which we are accustomed to speak.

Our various states or affections of the mind, I have already divided into two classes, according to the nature of the circumstances which precede them,—the External and the Internal, and this latter class into two orders, our Intellectual States of Mind, and our Emotions. It is with the intellectual phenomena that we are at present concerned; and this order I would arrange under two generic capacities, that appear to me to comprehend or exhaust the phenomena of the order. The whole order, as composed of feelings, which arise immediately, in consequence of certain former feelings of the mind, may be technically termed, in reference to these feelings which have induced them, Suggestions; but, in the suggested feelings themselves, there is one striking difference. If we analyse our trains of intellectual thought, exclusively of the emotions which may co-exist or mingle with them, and of sensations that may be accidentally excited by external objects, we shall find them to be composed of two very distinct sets of feelings,—one set of which are mere conceptions or images of the past, that rise, image after image, in regular sequence,

but simply in succession, without any feeling of relation necessarily involved; while the perceptions of relation in the various objects of our thought, form another set of feelings, of course as various as the relations perceived. Conceptions and relations, it is with these, and with these alone, that we are intellectually conversant. There is thus an evident ground for the arrangement of the internal suggestions, that form our trains of thought, under two heads, according as the feeling excited directly by some former feeling, may be either a simple conception, in its turn, perhaps, giving place to some other conception as transient; or may be the feeling of a relation which two or more objects of our thought are considered by us as bearing to each other. There is, in short in the mind a capacity of association; or as, for reasons afterwards to be stated, I would rather term it,—the capacity of Simple Suggestion,—by which feelings, formerly existing, are revived, in consequence of the mere existence of other feelings, as there is also a capacity of feeling resemblance, difference, proportion, or relation in general, when two or more external objects, or two or more feelings of the mind itself, are considered by us, which mental capacity, in distinction from the former, I would term the capacity of Relative Suggestion; and of these simple and relative suggestions, our whole intellectual trains of thought are composed. As I am no lover of new phrases, where the old can be used without danger of mistake, I would very willingly substitute for the phrase *relative suggestion* the term *comparison*, which is more familiar, and expresses very nearly the same meaning. But comparison, though it involve the feeling of relation, seems to me also to imply a voluntary seeking for some relation, which is far from necessary to the mere in-



ternal suggestion or feeling of the relation itself. The resemblance of two objects strikes me, indeed, when I am studiously comparing them; but it strikes me also, with not less force, on many other occasions, when I had not previously been forming the slightest intentional comparison. I prefer, therefore, a term which is applicable alike to both cases, when a relation is sought, and when it occurs, without any search or desire of finding it.

The term judgment, in its strict philosophic sense, as the mere perception of relation, is more exactly synonymous with the phrase which I have employed, and might have been substituted with safety, if the vulgar use of the term, in many vague significations, had not given some degree of indistinctness even to the philosophical use of it. I may remark, too, that, in our works of logic and intellectual physiology, judgment and reasoning are usually discussed separately, as if there were some essential difference of their nature; and, therefore, since I include them both, in the relative suggestions of which I shall afterwards have to treat, it seems advisable, not to employ for the whole a name which is already appropriated, and very generally limited, to a part. As the rise in the mind of the feeling of relation, from the mere perception or conception of objects, is, however, what I mean to denote by the phrase Relative Suggestion; and as judgment, in its strictest sense, is nothing more than this feeling of relation of any two or more objects, considered by us together, I shall make no scruple to use the shorter and more familiar term, as synonymous, when there can be no danger of its being misunderstood.

The intellectual states of the mind, then, to give a brief illustration of my division, I consider as all

referable to two generic susceptibilities,—those of Simple Suggestion and Relative Suggestion. Our perception or conception of one object excites, of itself, and without any known cause, external to the mind, the conception of some other object, as when the mere sound of our friend's name suggests to us the conception of our friend himself,—in which case, the conception of our friend which follows the perception of the sound, involves no feeling of any common property with the sound which excites it, but is precisely the same state of mind which might have been induced by various other previous circumstances, by the sight of the chair on which he sat, of the book which he read to us, of the landscape which he painted. This is Simple Suggestion.

But, together with this capacity of Simple Suggestion, by which conception after conception arises in the mind,—precisely in the same manner, and in the same state, as each might have formed a part of other trains, and in which the particular state of mind that arises by suggestion does not necessarily involve any consideration of the state of mind which preceded it, there is a suggestion of a very different sort, which, in every case, involves the consideration, not of one phenomenon of mind, but of two or more phenomena, and which constitutes the feeling of agreement, disagreement, or relation of some sort. I perceive, for example, a horse and a sheep at the same moment. The perception of the two is followed by that different state of mind which constitutes the feeling of their agreement in certain respects, or of their disagreement in certain other respects. I think of the square of the hypotenuse of a right-angled triangle, and of the squares of the two other sides: I feel the relation of equality. I see a dramatic representation: I listen

to the cold conceits which the author of the tragedy, in his omnipotent command over warriors and lovers of his own creation, gives to his hero, in his most impassioned situations: I am instantly struck with their unsuitableness to the character and the circumstances. All the intellectual successions of feeling, in these cases, which constitute the perception of relation, differ from the results of simple suggestion in necessarily involving the consideration of two or more objects, or affections of mind, that immediately preceded them. I may think of my friend, in the case of simple suggestion; that is to say, my mind may exist in the state which constitutes the conception of my friend, without that previous state which constitutes the perception of the sound of his name; for the conception of him may be suggested by various objects and remembrances. But I cannot, in the cases of relative suggestion, think of the resemblance of a horse and a sheep, of the proportion of the squares of the sides of a right-angled triangle, or of the want of the truth of nature in the expressions of a dramatic hero, without those previous states of mind, which constitute the conceptions of a horse and a sheep, of the sides of the triangle, or of the language of the warrior or lover, and the circumstances of triumph, or hope, or despair, in which he is exhibited to us by the creative artist.

With these two capacities of suggested feelings, simple and relative, which are all that truly belong to the class of intellectual states of the mind, various emotions may concur, particularly that most general of all emotions, the emotion of desire, in some one or other of its various forms. According as this desire does or does not concur with them, the intellectual states themselves appear to be different; and, by those





tant elements. The permanent desire of discovering something unknown, or of establishing, or confuting, or illustrating some point of belief or conjecture, may co-exist, indeed, with the continued series of relations that are felt, but does not alter the nature of that law, by which these judgments, or relative suggestions, succeed each other. There is no new power to be found, but only the union of certain intellectual states of the mind, with certain desires,—a species of combination not more wonderful in itself, than any other complex mental state,—as when we, at the same moment, see and smell a rose, or listen to the voice of a friend who has been long absent from us, and see, at the same moment, that face of affection, which is again giving confidence to our heart and gladness to our very eyes.

Our intellectual states of mind, then, are either those resemblances of past affections of the mind, which arise by simple suggestion, or those feelings of relation, which arise by what I have termed relative suggestions, the one set resulting, indeed, from some prior states of the mind, but not involving, necessarily, any consideration of these previous states of mind, which suggested them; the other set necessarily involving the consideration of two or more objects, or two or more affections of the mind, as subjects of the relation which is felt.

How readily all the intellectual states of mind, which are commonly ascribed to a variety of powers, may be reduced to those two, will appear more clearly, after we have considered and illustrated the phenomena of each set.

I shall proceed, therefore, in the first place, to the phenomena of simple suggestion, which are usually referred to a principle of association in our ideas.

## LECTURE XXXIV.

*Classification of the Internal Affections of Mind, continued—On Simple Suggestion—Advantages resulting from the Principle of Suggestion—On Mr Hume's Classification of the Causes of Associate Feelings.*

GENTLEMEN, my general arrangement of the various phenomena, or states of the mind, is, I trust, now sufficiently familiar to you. We know the mind only in the succession of these states, as they vary from moment to moment; and you have learned to class them, as, in the first place, External or Internal Affections, according as the mental changes of state that are induced, have arisen immediately from the presence of external objects, or from some preceding state of the mind itself; and the latter of these classes you have learned also to subdivide into its two distinct orders of Intellectual States of the Mind and Emotions. Thus far we have proceeded, I trust, without much risk of misconception.

In my last lecture I proceeded to consider the former of these orders, and arranged all the variety of our Intellectual States of Mind under two generic capacities,—those of Simple and of Relative Suggestion. Intellectually we conceive or we judge; our past feelings, in Simple Suggestion, of image after image, arise again in colours more or less faint, without any known cause exterior to the mind. By our capacity of the other species of Suggestion, we are impressed with feelings of a different order, that arise when two or more objects are contemplated together,—feelings of their agreement, proportion, or some one or other of the variety of their relations. Of these



two orders of feelings, and of these alone, consists the whole varied tissue of our trains of thought. All the intellectual powers, of which writers on this branch of science speak, are, as we shall find, only modes of these two, as they exist simply, or as they exist in combination with some desire more or less permanent,—with the desire of prosecuting a continued inquiry, for example, or of evolving its results to others,—as in the long series of our ratiocination; or of forming some splendid succession of images and incidents, as in the magic pictures of poetry and romance. The simplification may, perhaps, at present appear to you excessive; but I flatter myself that, after the two generic capacities themselves shall have been fully considered by us, it will not appear to you more than is absolutely necessary for accuracy of analysis and arrangement.

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*Simple Suggestion.*

The intellectual phenomena which we are, in the first place, to consider, then, are those of Simple Suggestion, which are usually classed under the general term of the Association of Ideas; a term employed to denote that tendency of the mind by which feelings that were formerly excited by an external cause arise afterwards, in regular successions, to each other, as it were spontaneously, or at least without the immediate presence of any known external cause. The limitation of the term, however, to those states of mind which are exclusively denominated ideas, has, I conceive, tended greatly to obscure the subject, or at least to deprive us of the aid which we might have received from it in the analysis of many of the most complex phenomena. The influence of the associating prin-

ciple itself extends not to ideas only, but to every species of affection of which the mind is susceptible. Our internal joys, sorrows, and all the variety of our emotions, are capable of being revived in a certain degree by the mere influence of this principle, and of blending with the ideas or other feelings which awakened them, in the same manner as our conceptions of external things. These last, however, it must be admitted, present the most striking and obvious examples of the influence of the principle, and are, therefore, the fittest for illustrating it. The faint and shadowy elements of past emotions, as mingling in any present feeling, it may not be easy to distinguish; but our remembrances of things without are clear and definite, and are easily recognised by us as images of the past. We have seen, in the history of our senses, by what admirable means Nature has provided for communicating to man those first rude elements of knowledge, which are afterwards to be the materials of his sublimest speculations, and with what still more admirable goodness she has ministered to his pleasure in these primary elements of thought, and in the very provision which she has formed for the subsistence of his animal frame,—making the organs by which he becomes acquainted with the properties of external things, not the fountain of knowledge only, but an ever-mingling source of enjoyment and instruction.

It is through the medium of perception, as we have seen, that is to say, through the medium of those sensitive capacities already so fully considered by us, that we acquire our knowledge of the properties of external things. But if our knowledge of these properties were limited to the moment of perception, and were extinguished for ever with the fading sensation from which it sprang, the acquisition of this fugitive know-

ledge would be of little value. We should still, indeed, be sensible of the momentary pleasure or pain; but all experience of the past, and all that confidence in the regular successions of future events which flows from experience of the past, would, of course, be excluded by universal and instant forgetfulness. In such circumstances, if the common wants of our animal nature remained, it is evident that even life itself, in its worst and most miserable state, could not be supported; since, though oppressed with thirst and hunger, and within reach of the most delicious fruits and the most plentiful spring-water, we should still suffer, without any knowledge of the means by which the suffering could be remedied. Even if, by some provision of Nature, our bodily constitution had been so framed as to require no supply of subsistence, or if, instinctively and without reflection, we had been led, on the first impulse of appetite, to repair our daily waste, and to shelter ourselves from the various causes of physical injury to which we are exposed, though our animal life might then have continued to be extended to as long a period as at present, still, if but a succession of momentary sensations, it would have been one of the lowest forms of mere animal life. It is only as capable of looking before and behind; that is to say, as capable of those spontaneous suggestions of thought which constitute remembrance and foresight, that we rise to the dignity of intellectual being, and that man can be said to be the image of that Purest of Intellects, who looks backward and forward, in a single glance, not on a few years only, but on all the ages of eternity. "Deum te scito esse," says Cicero, in allusion to these powers—"Deum te scito esse, siquidem Deus est, qui viget, qui sentit,—qui meminit, qui prævidet, qui tam regit et moderatur et movet id



corpus, cui præpositus est, quam hunc mundum princeps ille Deus."

" Were it not so, the Soul, all dead and lost,  
As the fix'd stream beneath the impassive frost,<sup>1</sup>  
Form'd for no end, and impotent to please,  
Would lie inactive on the couch of ease;  
And, heedless of proud fame's immortal lay,  
Sleep all her dull divinity away."<sup>2</sup>



Without any remembrance of pleasures formerly enjoyed, or of sorrows long past and long endured,—looking on the persons and scenes which had surrounded us from the first moment of our birth, as if they were objects altogether unknown to us,—incapable even of as much reasoning as still gleams through the dreadful stupor of the maniac, or of conveying even that faint expression of thought with which the rudest savages, in the rudest language, are still able to hold some communication of their passions or designs;—such, but for that capacity which we are considering, would have been the deplorable picture of the whole human race. What is now revered by us as the most generous and heroic virtue, or the most profound and penetrating genius, would have been nothing more than this wretchedness and imbecility. It is the suggesting principle, the reviver of thoughts and feelings which have passed away, that gives value to all our other powers and susceptibilities, intellectual and moral,—not, indeed, by producing them, for, though unevolved, they would still, as latent capacities, be a part of the original constitution of our spiritual nature,—but by rousing them into action, and furnishing them with those accumulating and inexhaustible materials, which are to be the elements of future thought, and

<sup>1</sup> " Like the tall cliff beneath the impassive frost."—Orig.

<sup>2</sup> Cawthorn.—Regulation of the Passions, &c. v. 15-20.

the objects of future emotion. Every talent by which we excel, and every vivid feeling which animates us, derive their energy from the suggestions of this ever-active principle. We love and hate, we desire and fear, we use means for obtaining good, and avoiding evil, because we remember the objects and occurrences which we have formerly observed, and because the future, in the similarity of the successions which it presents, appears to us only a prolongation of the past.

In conferring on us the capacity of these spontaneous suggestions, then, Heaven has much more than doubled our existence; for, without it, and consequently, without those faculties and emotions which involve it, existence would scarcely have been desirable. The very importance of the benefits which we derive from it, however, renders us perhaps less sensible of its value; since it is so mingled, with all our knowledge, and all our plans of action, that we find it difficult to conceive a state of sentient being, of which it is not a part, and to estimate, consequently, at a just amount, the advantage which it affords. The future memory of perception seems to us almost implied in perception itself; and to speculate on that strange state of existence which would have been the condition of man, if he had been formed without the power of remembrance, and capable only of a series of sensations, has, at first, an appearance almost of absurdity and contradiction, as if we were imagining conditions which were in their nature incompatible. Yet, assuredly, if it were possible for us to consider such a subject *a priori*, the real cause of wonder would appear to be, not in the absence of the suggestions of memory, as in the case imagined, but in that remembrance of which we have the happy experience. When a feeling, of the existence of which conscious-

ness furnishes the only evidence, has passed away so completely, that not even the slightest consciousness of it remains, it would surely, but for that experience, be more natural to suppose that it had perished altogether, than that it should, at the distance of many years, without any renewal of it by the external cause which originally produced it, again start, as it were of itself, into being. To foresee that which has not yet begun to exist, is, in itself, scarcely more unaccountable than to see, as it were before us, what has wholly ceased to exist. The present moment is all of which we are conscious, and which can strictly be said to have a real existence, in relation to ourselves. That mode of time, which we call the past, and that other mode of time, which we call the future, are both equally unexisting. That the knowledge of either should be added to us, so as to form a part of our present consciousness, is a gift of Heaven, most beneficial to us indeed, but most mysterious, and equally, or nearly equally mysterious, whether the unexisting time, of which the knowledge is indulged to us, be the future or the past.

The advantage which we derive from the principle of suggestion, it must, however, be remarked, consists, not in its mere revival of thoughts and feelings, of which we had before been conscious, but in its revival of these in a certain order. If past objects and events had been suggested to us again, not in that series in which they had formerly occurred, nor according to any of those relations which human discernment has been able to discover among them, but in endless confusion and irregularity, the knowledge thus acquired, however gratifying as a source of mere variety of feeling, would avail us little, or rather would be wholly profitless, not merely in our speculative inqui-



ries as philosophers, but in the simplest actions of common life. It is quite evident that, in this case, we should be altogether unable to turn our experience to account, as a mode of avoiding future evil or obtaining future good; because, for this application of our knowledge, it would be requisite that events, before observed, should occur to us at the time when similar events might be expected. We refrain from tasting the poisonous berry, which we have known to be the occasion of death to him who tasted it; because the mere sight of it brings again before us the fatal event which we have heard or witnessed. We satisfy our appetite with a salutary fruit without the slightest apprehension; because its familiar appearance recalls to us the refreshment which we have repeatedly received. But if these suggestions were reversed,—if the agreeable images of health and refreshment were all that were suggested by the poisonous plant, and pain, and convulsions, and death, were the only images suggested by the sight of the grateful and nourishing fruit, there can be no doubt to which of the two our unfortunate preference would be given. To take the most familiar of all instances, that of language, which, either as written or spoken, is in such constant use, and which is so essential, not merely to our first advance from absolute barbarism, but to the common domestic necessities, even of barbarous life, that without it we can scarcely conceive two individuals, however rude, to exist together: this, it is evident, could not have been invented, nor, if invented, could it serve any other purpose than to mislead, if the words spoken were to have no greater chance of suggesting the meaning intended by the speaker, than any other meaning which any other words of the language might be employed to denote. What social affection could continue for an hour, if

the sight of a friend were to suggest, in intimate combination, not the kindnesses which he had conferred, and all the enjoyments of which he had been the source, but the malice, and envy, and revenge of some jealous and disappointed enemy?

He who has given us, in one simple principle, the power of reviving the past, has not made his gift so unavailing. The feelings which this wonderful principle preserves and restores, arise, not loosely and confusedly,—for what is there in the whole wide scene of nature which does so occur?—but, according to general laws or tendencies of succession, contrived with the most admirable adaptation to our wants, so as to bring again before us the knowledge formerly acquired by us, at the very time when it is most profitable that it should return. A value is thus given to experience, which otherwise would not be worthy of the name; and we are enabled to extend it almost at pleasure, so as to profit, not merely by that experience which the events of nature, occurring in conformity with these general laws, must at any rate have afforded to us, but to regulate this very experience itself, to dispose objects and events, so that, by tendencies of suggestion, on the firmness of which we may put perfect reliance, they shall give us, perhaps at the distance of many years, such lessons as we may wish them to yield, and thus to invent and create, in a great measure, the intellectual and moral history of our future life, as an epic or dramatic writer arranges at his will the continued scenes of his various and magnificent narrative. I need not add, that it is on this skilful management of the laws which regulate our trains of thought, the whole theory and practice of education are founded; that art, which I have already repeatedly represented to you as the noblest of all the arts of man,—itself

the animating spirit of every other art,—which exerts its own immediate operation, not on lifeless things, but on the affections and faculties of the soul itself, and which has raised us from the dust, where we slept or trembled in sluggish yet ferocious ignorance, the victims of each other, and of every element around us, to be the sharers and diffusers of the blessings of social polity, the measurers of the earth and of the skies, and the rational worshippers of that eternal Being by whom they and we were created.

That there is a tendency of ideas to suggest each other, without any renewed perception of the external objects which originally excited them, and that the suggestion is not altogether loose and indefinite, but that certain ideas have a peculiar tendency to suggest certain other relative ideas in associate trains of thought, is too familiar to you, as a general fact of our intellectual nature, to require to be illustrated by example.

It has been beautifully compared, by the most philosophic of our poets, to the mutual influence of two sympathetic needles, which Strada, in one of his Prologues, availing himself of a supposed fact, which was then believed, or scarcely doubted by many philosophers, makes the subject of verses, supposed to be recited by Cardinal Bembo, in the character of Lucretius. The needles were fabled to have been magnetized together, and suspended over different circles, so as to be capable of moving along an alphabet. In these circumstances, by the remaining influence of their original kindred magnetism, they were supposed, at whatever distance, to follow each other's motions, and pause accordingly at the same point; so that, by watching them at concerted hours, the friends who possessed this happy telegraph were supposed to be



able to communicate to each other their feelings, with the same accuracy and confidence as when they were together.

“For when the different images of things,  
By chance combined, have struck the attentive soul,  
With deeper impulse, or, connected long,  
Have drawn her frequent eye; howe’er distinct  
The external scenes, yet oft the ideas gain  
From that conjunction an eternal tie  
And sympathy unbroken. Let the Mind  
Recall one partner of the various league:  
Immediate, lo! the firm confederates rise—  
And each his former station straight resumes;  
One movement governs the consenting throng,  
And all at once with rosy pleasure shine,  
Or all are sadden’d with the glooms of care.  
’Twas thus, if ancient fame the truth unfold,  
Two faithful needles, from the informing touch  
Of the same parent-stone, together drew  
Its mystic virtue, and at first conspired  
With fatal impulse quivering to the pole:  
Then, though disjoin’d by kingdoms,—though the main  
Roll’d its broad surge betwixt,—and different stars  
Beheld their wakeful motions,—yet preserved  
The former friendship, and remember’d still  
The alliance of their birth. Whate’er the line  
Which one possess’d, nor pause nor quiet knew  
The sure associate, ere, with trembling speed,  
He found its path, and fix’d unerring there.  
Such is the secret union when we feel  
A song, a flower, a name, at once restore  
Those long connected scenes where first they moved  
The attention. Backward through her mazy walks,  
Guiding the wanton fancy to her scope,  
To temples, courts, or fields,—with all the band  
Of (living<sup>1</sup>) forms, of passions, and designs,  
Attendant: whence, if pleasing in itself,  
The prospect from that sweet accession gains  
Redoubled influence o’er the listening mind.

<sup>1</sup> Painted—Orig.

By these mysterious ties, the busy power  
Of memory her ideal train preserves  
Entire ; or when they would elude her watch,  
Reclaims their fleeting footsteps from the waste  
Of dark oblivion.”<sup>1</sup>

What, then, are these mysterious ties?—or, to state the question more philosophically, what are the general circumstances which regulate the successions of our ideas?

That there is some regularity in these successions, must, as I have already remarked, have been felt by every one ; and there are many references to such regularity in the works of philosophers of every age. The most striking ancient reference, however, to any general circumstances, or laws of suggestion, though the enumeration of these is hinted rather than developed at any length, is that which you will find in a passage, quoted by Dr Beattie and Mr Stewart from Aristotle. It is a passage explanatory of the process by which, in voluntary reminiscence, we endeavour to discover the idea of which we are in search. We are said to hunt for it (*Θηρεύομεν* is the word in the original) among other ideas, either of objects existing at present, or at some former time ; and from their resemblance, contrariety, and contiguity—*ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν, ἢ ἄλλου τινὸς, καὶ ἀφ’ ὁμοίου, ἢ ἐναντίου, ἢ τοῦ συνέγγυς. Διὰ τοῦτο γινεταὶ ἡ ἀνάμνησις.*<sup>2</sup> This brief enumeration of the general circumstances which direct us in reminiscence, is worthy of our attention on its own account ; and is not less remarkable on account of the very close resemblance which it bears to the arrangement afterwards made by Mr Hume, though there is no reason to believe that the modern philosopher was at all

<sup>1</sup> Pleasures of Imagination, Book III. v. 312-352.

<sup>2</sup> Arist. de Memor. et Reminisc. c. ii. ; v. ii. p. 86. Edit. Du Val.

acquainted with the classification which had, at so great a distance of time, anticipated his own.

I must remark, however, that though it would be in the highest degree unjust to the well-known liberality and frankness of Mr Hume's character, to suppose him to have been aware of any enumeration of the general circumstances on which suggestion appears to depend, prior to that which he has himself given us, his attempt was far from being so original as he supposed. I do not allude merely to the passage of Aristotle, already quoted, nor to a corresponding passage which I might have quoted from one of the most celebrated of his commentators, Dr Thomas Aquinas, but to various passages which I have found in the works of writers of much more recent date, in which the influence of resemblance and contiguity, the two generic circumstances to which, on his own principles, his own triple division should have been reduced, is particularly pointed out. Thus, to take an example from an elementary work of a very eminent author, Ernesti, published in the year 1734,—his *Initia Doctrinæ Solidioris*,—with what precision has he laid down those very laws of association of which Mr Hume speaks. After stating the general fact of suggestion, or association, under the Latin term *phantasia*, he proceeds to state the principles which guide it. All the variety of these internal successions of our ideas, he says, may be reduced to the following law:—When one image is present in the mind, it may suggest the image of some absent object, either of one that is similar in some respect to that already present, or of one of which the present is a part, or of one which has been present together with it on some former occasion. “*Hujus autem phantasie lex hæc est: Præsentibus animo rerum*



imaginibus quibuscunque, recurrere et redire ad animum possunt rerum absentium olimque perceptarum imagines, præsentibus similes, vel quarum, quæ sunt præsentes, partes sunt,—vel denique, quas cum præsentibus simul hausimus.”<sup>1</sup>

Even the arrangement, as stated by Mr Hume, is not expressed in more formal terms. But as it is to his arrangement the philosophers of our own country are accustomed to refer, in treating of association, the importance thus attached to it gives it a preferable claim to our fuller discussion. It is stated by him briefly in two paragraphs of his *Essay on the Association of Ideas*.

“Though it be too obvious to escape observation,” he says, “that different ideas are connected together, I do not find that any philosopher has attempted to enumerate or class all the principles of association; a subject, however, that seems worthy of curiosity. To me there appear to be only three principles of connexion among ideas, viz., resemblance, contiguity in time or place, and cause or effect.

“That these principles serve to connect ideas, will not, I believe, be much doubted. A picture naturally leads our thoughts to the original. The mention of one apartment in a building naturally introduces an inquiry or discourse concerning the others. And if we think of a wound, we can scarcely forbear reflecting on the pain which follows it. But that the enumeration is complete, and that there are no other principles of association except these, may be difficult to prove to the satisfaction of the reader, or even to a man’s own satisfaction. All we can do in such cases, is to run over several instances, and examine carefully the principle which binds the different

<sup>1</sup> *De Mente Humana*, c. i. sect. xvi. pp. 138, 139.

thoughts to each other,—never stopping till we render the principle as general as possible. The more instances we examine, and the more care we employ, the more assurance shall we acquire, that the enumeration which we form from the whole is complete and entire.”<sup>1</sup>

On these paragraphs of Mr Hume, a few obvious criticisms present themselves. In the first place, however, I must observe,—to qualify in some degree the severity of the remarks which may be made on his classification,—that it is evident, from the very language now quoted to you, that he is far from bringing forward his classification as complete. He states, indeed, that it appears to him, that there are no other principles of connexion among our ideas than the three which he has mentioned; but he adds, that though the reality of their influence as connecting principles will not, he believes, be much doubted, it may still be difficult to prove, to the satisfaction of his reader, or even of himself, that the enumeration is complete; and he recommends, in consequence, a careful examination of every instance of suggestion, in the successive trains of our ideas, that other principles, if any such there be, may be detected.

But to proceed to the actual classification, as presented to us by Mr Hume. A note, which he has added to the paragraph that contains his system, affords, perhaps, as striking an instance as is to be found in the history of science of that illusion which the excessive love of simplicity tends to produce, even in the most acute and subtile philosopher, so as to blind to the most manifest inconsistencies, in his own arrangement, those powers of critical discernment which would have flashed instant detection on incon-

<sup>1</sup> Hume's Inquiry concerning the Human Understanding, sect. iii.

sistencies far less glaringly apparent in the speculations of another. After stating that there appear to him to be only the three principles of connexion already mentioned, Mr Hume adds, in a note,—as an instance of other connexions apparently different from these three, which may, notwithstanding, be reduced to them,—

“ *Contrast, or contrariety*, also is a species of connexion among ideas. But it may, perhaps, be considered as a mixture of causation and resemblance. Where two objects are contrary, the one destroys the other, *i. e.*, is the cause of its annihilation, and the idea of the annihilation of an object implies the idea of its former existence.”

When we hear or read for the first time this little theory of the suggestions of contrast, there is, perhaps, no one who does not feel some difficulty in believing it to be a genuine speculation of that powerful mind which produced it. Contrast, says Mr Hume, is a mixture of causation and resemblance. An object, when contrasted with another, destroys it. In destruction there is causation; and we cannot conceive destruction without having the idea of former existence. Thus, to take an instance,—Mr Hume does not deny, that the idea of a dwarf may suggest, by contrast, the idea of a giant; but he says that the idea of a dwarf suggests the idea of a giant, because the idea of a dwarf *destroys* the idea of a giant, and thus, by the connecting principle of causation involved in all destruction, may suggest the idea destroyed: And he adds, as an additional reason for the suggestion, that the idea of the annihilation of a giant implies the idea of the former existence of a giant. And all this strange and complicated analysis,—this explanation, not of the *obscurum per obscurius*, which is a much



\_\_\_\_\_ of the incident per  
\_\_\_\_\_ it was in its very acute  
\_\_\_\_\_ and familiar fact of  
\_\_\_\_\_ its opposites.

[illegible]

In the former case there is no truth if indeed there be any leading whatever in the assertion that it involves one of the ideas destroying the other; for so far as the idea of one thing from destroying the idea of the part that in the actual case supposed, it is the very reason of the existence of the second idea; say, the very supposition of a perceived contrast implies that there is no such annihilation; for both ideas must be present to the mind together. or they could not appear either similar or dissimilar, that is to say, would not be known by us as contrasted, or contrary in any respect. It is, indeed, not very easy to conceive how a mind so acute as that of Mr Hume should not have discovered that grossest of all logical and physical errors involved in his explanation, that

it accounts for the existence of a feeling, by supposing it previously to exist as the cause of itself. If, as he says, the idea of the annihilation of an object implies the idea of its former existence—an assertion which is by no means so favourable as he thinks to his own theory—it must surely be admitted, that no annihilation can take place before the existence of that which is to be annihilated. Whether, therefore, we suppose that the idea of the dwarf, which suggests the idea of the giant, annihilates that idea, or is itself annihilated by it, the two ideas of the dwarf and the giant must have existed before the annihilation of either. The suggestion, in short, which is the difficulty, and the only difficulty to be explained, must have completely taken place, before the principle can even be imagined to operate, on which the suggestion itself is said to depend.

Such minute criticism, however, is, perhaps, more than it is necessary to give to a doctrine so obviously false, even sanctioned as it is by so very eminent a name.

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#### LECTURE XXXV.

*On Mr Hume's Classification of the Causes of Associate Feelings, concluded—Primary Laws of Suggestion—I. Resemblance.*

IN the conclusion of my last Lecture, Gentlemen, I offered some remarks on Mr Hume's classification of the circumstances on which he supposes our associate trains of thought to depend, and particularly on the very strange attempt which he made, in conformity with this arrangement, to reduce contrast, as a connecting principle of our ideas, into causation and

resemblance,—an attempt which, as we have seen, explains nothing; and explains nothing with most laborious incongruity. Of such mistakes of such a mind, it should, as I have already remarked, be the natural tendency to inspire us with more diffidence in our own judgment, and more indulgent toleration for the want of discernment in others, which, in the intercourse of life, we must often have to discover and lament. Above all, as the most instructive lesson which can be derived from them, they should teach us the folly of attaching ourselves implicitly to great names; since, in adopting the whole system of opinions, even of the most acute philosophers, we may be in danger of embracing tenets, the absurdity of which, though altogether unobserved by their illustrious authors, minds of a much humbler class might, perhaps, have been swifter to perceive, and which, if they had first occurred to ourselves in our own speculations, unsanctioned by authority, we should probably not have hesitated a single moment in rejecting.

To the threefold division, which Mr Hume has made, of the principles of association in the trains of our ideas, as consisting in resemblance, contiguity, and causation, there is an obvious objection of a very different kind, not founded on excessive simplicity, the love of which might more naturally be supposed to have misled him, but on its redundancy, according to the very principles of his own theory. Causation, far from being opposed to contiguity, so as to form a separate class, is, in truth, the most exquisite species of proximity in time, and in most cases of contiguity in place also, which could be adduced; because it is not a proximity depending on casual circumstances, and consequently liable to be broken, as these circumstances may exist apart, but one which depends only



on the mere existence of the two objects that are related to each other as cause and effect, and therefore fixed and never-failing. Other objects may sometimes be proximate; but a cause and effect are always proximate, and must be proximate, and are, indeed, classed in that relation, merely from this constant proximity. On his own principles, therefore, the three connexions of our ideas should indisputably be reduced to two. To speak of resemblance, contiguity, and causation, as three distinct classes, is, with Mr Hume's view of causation, and indeed with every view of it, as if a mathematician should divide lines into straight, curved, and circular. The inhabitants of China are said to have made a proverbial division of the human race into men, women, and Chinese. With their view of their own importance, we understand the proud superiority of the distinction which they have made. But this sarcastic insolence would surely have been absurdity itself if they had not intended it to express some characteristic and exclusive excellence, but had considered themselves as such ordinary men and women as are to be found in all the other regions of the earth.

Resemblance and contiguity in place and time,—to which, on his own principles, Mr Hume's arrangement must be reduced,—may be allowed, indeed, to hold a prominent rank, in whatever classification there may be formed, if any be to be formed, of the principles that regulate our trains of thought. But are there, in this case, truly distinct classes of suggestions that are not reducible to any more common principle? or are they not all reducible to a single influence? I have already remarked the error into which the common phrase, *Association of Ideas*, has led us, by restricting, in our conception, the influence of the sug-

gesting principle to those particular states of mind which are exclusively denominated ideas; and it is this false restriction which seems to me to have led to the supposition of different principles of association, to be classed in the manner proposed by Mr Hume and others, under distinct heads. All suggestion, as I conceive, may, if our analysis be sufficiently minute, be found to depend on prior co-existence, or at least on such immediate proximity as is itself, very probably, a modification of co-existence. For this very nice reduction, however, we must take in the influence of emotions and other feelings, that are very different from ideas; as when an analagous object suggests an analagous object, by the influence of an emotion or sentiment, which each separately may have produced before, and which is therefore common to both. But though a very nice analysis may lead to this reference of all our suggestions to one common influence of former proximity or co-existence of feelings, it is very convenient, in illustration of the principle, to avail ourselves of the most striking subdivisions, in which the particular instances of that proximity may be arranged; and I shall therefore adopt, for this purpose, the arrangement which Mr Hume has made, if resemblance be allowed to comprehend every species of analogy, and if contrast, as a peculiar subdivision, be substituted for the superfluous one of causation. The illustrations which I shall use will be chiefly rhetorical; because these are, in truth, the most striking and beautiful illustrations, and because it may be of use to lead your attention more particularly to the great principles of human nature, as in their relation to human emotions and human judgments, the standard of all just criticism.

To begin, then, with resemblance, no one can be ignorant of the effect of strong similarity, in recalling objects, as when a pictured landscape recalls a familiar scene, or a portrait a familiar countenance. There are many cases of this kind, indeed, which, strictly speaking, cannot be said to be instances of suggestion, from resemblance, but to be reducible to the simple laws of perception, or, at least, to associations, which may be considered almost as involved in every repeated perception of the same object: for, if a portrait be faithfully painted, the effect which it produces on the eye that perceives it, is the same, or very nearly the same, as the effect produced on the eye by similar light reflected from the living object: and we might therefore, almost as justly, say, that, when any individual is seen by us repeatedly, he suggests himself by resemblance, as that he is thus suggested by his portrait.

In many other cases, in which the resemblance is less complete, its operation may, even without such refinement of analysis as that to which I have alluded, be very obviously brought under the influence of contiguity. Thus, as the drapery forms so important a part of the complex perception of the human figure, the costume of any period may recall to us some distinguished person of that time. A ruff, like that worn by Queen Elizabeth, brings before us the sovereign herself, though the person who wears the ruff may have no other circumstance of resemblance; because the ruff, and the general appearance of Queen Elizabeth, having formed one complex whole in our mind, it is necessary only that one part of the complexity should be recalled,—as the ruff in the case supposed,—to bring back all the other parts, by the mere principle of contiguity. The instance of drapery, which is but



an adjunct or accidental circumstance of the person, may be easily extended to other instances, in which the resemblance is in parts of the real and permanent figure; for, though the drapery be only an adjunct of the person, considered separately from our perception, it is an actual component part, as much as any other component part, of that complex idea which is formed of the person perceived. If we meet a stranger who, in any particular feature, as in the shape and colour of his eyes, resembles one of our intimate friends, the conception of our friend is suggested; because the conception of our friend's countenance is a complex one, composed of the separate parts of forehead, eyes, cheeks, mouth, nose, chin; and the eyes of the stranger affecting our vision in precisely the same manner as the eyes of our friend, thus produce one part of the complex whole, which we have been accustomed to recognise as our friend; and the one part, by its former proximity, recalls the others. The view of one piece of landscape brings before us, in conception, a distant, and perhaps very different scene, by the influence of some small group of objects, or some detached rock, or tree, or hill, or water-fall, which produces the same impression on the eye in both. In this manner, by analyzing every complex whole, and tracing, in the variety of its composition, that particular part in which the actual similarity consists, and which may, therefore, be supposed to introduce the other parts that have formerly co-existed with it, we might be able to reduce every case of suggestion from direct resemblance to the influence of mere contiguity. But as, in many cases of faint analogical resemblance, this analysis, however just, might appear to involve too great subtilty; and as the suggestions of resemblance, if, indeed, they arise, as I suppose,

only from the influence of former proximity, are at least so easily distinguishable from the grosser instances of contiguity, that they may, without any inconvenience, be considered apart; I have thought it, as I have said, upon the whole, more advantageous for our present purpose of illustration, to consider them thus separately. By the application of a similar refined analysis, however, to other tribes of associations, even to those of contrast, we may, perhaps, find that it would be possible to reduce these also to the same comprehensive influence of mere proximity, as the single principle on which all suggestion is founded.

As yet we have taken into view only those more obvious resemblances of actual things, which produce similar impressions on our organs of sense. There is another species of resemblance, founded on more shadowy analogies, which gives rise to an innumerable series of suggestions, most important in value to our intellectual luxury, since it is to them we are, in a great measure, indebted for the most sublime of arts. To these analogies of objects, that agree in exciting similar emotions, we owe the simile, the metaphor, and, in general, all that figurative phraseology, which has almost made a separate language of poetry, as distinct from the abstract language of prose. "*Poetas omnino, quasi alienâ linguâ locutos, non cogar attingere,*" says Cicero. Yet the difference of the language of poetry and prose is much less in Latin than in our own tongue, in which the restriction of genders, in common discourse, to animated beings, gives, for the production of high rhetorical effect, such happy facilities of distinct personification. In poetry, we perceive everywhere what Aken-side calls—

“ The charm,  
That searchless Nature o’er the sense of man  
Diffuses,—to behold, in lifeless things,  
The inexpressive semblance of himself,  
Of thought and passion.”<sup>1</sup>

The zephyrs laugh,—the sky smiles,—the forest  
frowns,—the storm and the surge contend together,  
—the solitary place not merely blossoms like the rose,  
but it is glad.

“ Mark the sable woods,  
That shade sublime yon mountain’s nodding brow ;  
With what religious awe the solemn scene  
Commands your steps ! as if the reverend form  
Of Minos or of Numa should forsake  
The Elysian seats, and down the embowering glade  
Move to your pausing eye.”<sup>2</sup>

All nature becomes animated. The poetic genius,  
like that soul of the world, by which the early philo-  
sophers accounted for all earthly changes, breathes  
its own spirit into everything surrounding it. It is  
“quocunque vides, quocunque moveres,” that vivify-  
ing essence, which, in the beautiful language of Virgil,

—“ Cælum, ac terram, camposque liquentes,  
Lucentemque globum Lunæ, Titaniaque astra  
Spiritus intus alit, totamque infusa per artus  
Mens agitat molem, et magno se corpore miscet.”<sup>3</sup>

It is the metaphor which forms the essence of the  
language of poetry ; and it is to that peculiar mode  
of association which we are now considering, the sug-  
gestion of objects by their analogous objects, that the  
metaphor owes its birth, whether the analogy be  
derived from the moral to the physical, or from the

<sup>1</sup> Pleasures of Imagination, Book iii. v. 282-286.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. v. 286-292.

<sup>3</sup> Æn. VI. v. 724-727.



physical to the moral world. The metaphor expresses with rapidity the analogy, as it rises in immediate suggestion, and identifies it, as it were, with the object or emotion which it describes: the simile presents, not the analogy merely, but the two analogous objects, and traces their resemblance to each other with the formality of regular comparison. The metaphor, therefore, is the figure of passion; the simile the figure of calm description. In the drama, accordingly, as the most faithful poetic representation of passion, the simile should be of rare occurrence, and never but in situations in which the speaker may be considered as partaking almost the tranquillity of the poet himself. Thus, to take a well-known instance of error in this respect: when Portius, in the tragedy of Cato, at the very moment in which Lucia, whom he loves, has just bid him farewell for ever, and when he is struggling to detain her, traces all the resemblances of his passion to the flame of a fading lamp, we feel immediately, that a lover who could so fully develop a comparison, and a comparison, too, derived from an object the least likely to occur to him at such a moment, could not be suffering any very great agony of heart.

“Farewell,” says Lucia;

“O! how shall I repeat the word—for ever.”

To which Portius, hanging over her in despair, immediately replies—

“Thus, o’er the dying lamp, the unsteady flame  
Hangs quivering on a point, leaps off by fits,  
And falls again, as loath to quit its hold.  
Thou must not go! My soul still hovers o’er thee,  
And can’t get loose.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Act III. Scene 2.

The speech, it may be remarked, by combining a simile and metaphor, in the compass of a very few lines, presents at once a specimen of a figure which suits, and a figure which is altogether inconsistent with a state of passion. If the three lines which describe the flame of a lamp had been omitted, and only the conclusion retained,—

“Thou must not go! My soul still hovers o’er thee,  
And can’t get loose,”

there would still have been an analogy borrowed from a remote object, but an analogy implied, not developed, and expressed with the rapidity with which such analogies really arise.

It may perhaps be thought, that even the analogy implied in a metaphor, as it is borrowed from objects not immediately present and not essential to the emotion, is inconsistent with the natural direction of the suggesting principle in a state of violent feeling. But it is the nature of strong feeling to give to the whole character, for the time, a greater elevation, which enables it to comprehend, as it were, within its vision a greater multitude of kindred objects than can be grasped by it in its unimpassioned state, and to diffuse itself over them all, as if they were living and sympathizing parts of itself. If we attend to what occurs in real life, we shall find, that the metaphor, far from being unnatural, is almost a necessary part of the language of emotion, and that it is then that the language of prose makes its nearest approach to the language of poetry. Indeed, as poetry seems to have originated in the expression of lively feeling, it would have been truly singular if its language had been the least suited to the state in which such feelings are expressed.

"I cannot believe," says the younger Racine, in his *Reflections on Poetry*,—"I cannot believe, with Aristotle, that figures of speech are only expressions disguised, for the purpose of pleasing by the mere astonishment which their disguise affords; nor with Quintilian and Rollin, that they are expressions which the indigence of our language obliges us to borrow, when I reflect that we speak, without intending it, a figurative language whenever we are animated by passion. It is then that words derived from foreign objects present themselves so naturally, that it would be impossible to reject them, and to speak only in common terms. To be convinced of this, we have only to listen to a dispute between women of the lowest rank, who cannot be suspected of any very refined search for expressions. Yet what an abundance of figures do they use! They lavish the *metonymy*, the *catachresis*, the *hyperbole*, and all those other tropes, which, in spite of the pompous names that have been given to them by rhetoricians, are only forms of familiar speech used in common by them and by the vulgar."<sup>1</sup>

The discovery of the *metonymy* and *catachresis*, in the wranglings of the mob, has certainly a considerable resemblance to the discovery which Cornelius Scriblerus made of the ten predicaments of logic, in the battle of the serjeant and the butcher in the Bear-garden.

"Cornelius was forced to give Martin sensible images; thus, calling up the coachman, he asked him what he had seen in the Bear-garden? The man answered, he saw two men fight a prize: one was a fair man, a serjeant in the guards; the other black, a butcher; the serjeant had red breeches, the butcher blue; they fought upon a stage about four o'clock, and the

<sup>1</sup> C. III. Art. I.; Œuvres, tome v. p. 63. Edit. 1750.



serjeant wounded the butcher in the leg.—‘ Mark (quoth Cornelius) how the fellow runs through the prædicaments. Men, *substantia* ; two, *quantitas* ; fair and black, *qualitas* ; serjeant and butcher, *relatio* ; wounded the other, *actio et passio* ; fighting, *situs* ; stage, *ubi* ; two o’clock, *quando* ; blue and red breeches, *habitus*.’”<sup>1</sup>

“ Nothing is more evident,” says the same author, “ than that divers persons, no other way remarkable, have each a strong disposition to the formation of some particular trope or figure. Aristotle saith, that the hyperbole is an ornament fit for young men of quality ; accordingly we find in those gentlemen a wonderful propensity toward it, which is marvellously improved by travelling. Soldiers also and seamen are very happy in the same figure. The periphrasis or circumlocution is the peculiar talent of country farmers ; the proverb or apologue of old men at their clubs ; the ellipsis or speech by half words, of ministers and politicians ; the aposiopesis of courtiers ; the litotes, or diminution, of ladies, whisperers and backbiters ; and the anadiplosis of common cryers and hawkers, who, by redoubling the same words, persuade people to buy their oysters, green hastings, or new ballads. Epithets may be found in great plenty at Billingsgate, sarcasm and irony learned upon the water, and the epiphonema or exclamation frequently from the Bear-garden, and as frequently from the *hear him* of the House of Commons.”<sup>2</sup>

These examples are ludicrous indeed ; yet the observation of Racine is not the less just ; and we may safely conclude, however different it may be from the opinion which we should have formed *a priori*, that, when the mind is in a state of emotion, the suggestions

<sup>1</sup> Chap. vii.

<sup>2</sup> Art of Sinking in Poetry, c. xiii.

of analogy arise with more than usual copiousness and rapidity, and that figurative language is thus the very language of nature.

But though, in a state of emotion, images are readily suggested, according to that principle of shadowy and remote resemblance which we are considering, it must be remembered, as a rule which is to guide us in the use of figures, that in this case the mind seizes the analogy with almost unconscious comparison, and pours it forth in its vigorous expression with the rapidity of inspiration. It does not dwell on the analogy beyond the moment, but is hurried on to new analogies, which it seizes and deserts in like manner. This rapidity with which analogies are seized and deserted seems to me to justify, in some degree, in the drama and in highly impassioned poetry of every kind, what in poetry or general composition of a calmer kind, would be unpardonable inaccuracy. In the case of mixed metaphor, for instance, as when Hamlet talks of taking arms against a sea of troubles, nothing can be clearer than that there is an incongruity of phrase in the different parts of the sentence, since it is not with a sword or a spear that we stem the waves; and as the inconsistent images occur in the short compass of a single line, and are a part of a meditative soliloquy, a greater congruity might unquestionably have been preserved with advantage. But when the objection is made universal, and applied to every case of expression, even of the strongest passion, in which any mixture of metaphors occurs in the imagery of the longest sentence, I cannot but think that this universal censure has arisen from that technical criticism, which thinks only of tropes and figures, and the formal laws of rhetoric, and not from that sounder criticism, which founds its judgments on

the everlasting principles of our intellectual and moral nature. In conformity with these principles, a long and exact adherence to all the congruities of an image that has been accidentally used in a former part of a sentence or paragraph, though indispensably necessary in every species of calm composition, is yet rather censurable than commendable in scenes of dramatic passion. If the speaker be supposed to reflect that he is using a comparison, it is a proof that he is not impassioned at this moment of reflection; and if he be supposed to use the metaphorical expression only from its greater strength, as it bursts upon him immediately, and without any attention to the various properties of the object, which suggested it perhaps by a single analogy, nothing can be more just, in point of nature, than that a subsequent expression should chance to have little agreement with those other properties which never were real objects of his thought. When a metaphor is comprised in a few words,—and it is of such brief metaphors that the poetic language of passion should in preference be composed—the image should be faithfully observed; because the metaphorical expression does not then outlast the feeling of analogy which originally suggested it. But it is very different when it extends through a long sentence. To follow it out rigidly, for several lines, in the expression of strong feeling, is an evident departure from nature; since it is to have a remote object of analogy constantly in view during the whole time of the emotion. To seize a new metaphor, or, in other words, to think no more of a metaphorical expression when it has already exhibited all the analogy that was felt at the time when it rose, as it were, to our utterance, is to be conscious only of our emotion itself, and to speak with that instant



inspiration which it gives. It may be to mix metaphors, in the common rhetorical sense of that phrase, but it is assuredly to be faithful to nature. It must not be forgotten, however, that it is only to the eloquence of strong passion that such a license is allowable; and that it cannot be admitted in any case in which the very image conveyed in the primary metaphor can be supposed, without impropriety, to be itself a continued object of the speaker's thought.

The simile, as I have already remarked, is a figure of more deliberate reflection than the metaphor: yet, notwithstanding the intellectual labour which it seems to imply, it is evident that, in the pleasure which we receive from it, we still have in view its source in the general principle of spontaneous suggestion. It is not every simile, therefore, however just, that pleases; but such only as seem to be derived from objects that might naturally be expected to occur to the mind in the situation in which the comparison is made. We talk of far-fetched similes, not as implying that there is no real analogy in the objects which they compare, or that the analogy is not as complete as in many other comparisons to which we do not give that name, but merely because the analogy is sought in objects, the natural occurrence of which to the mind does not seem very probable. We are more pleased, in general, with comparisons derived from the works of nature, than with those which are borrowed from works of art; partly because natural objects are not limited to a particular class of observers, but may be supposed to have been present to the senses of all in every period of their life, and therefore to be of more ready and general occurrence in suggestion; and partly, because with works of human art there is associated a degree of minute labour, which is not favourable to

conceptions of beauty and sublimity, and which carries with it the feeling of toil and artificial preparation into all the groups of images with which it is combined. In exactness of analogy,—and this, too, in a case in which such similitude could scarcely have been expected,—it is not easy to find a comparison more striking than that which Butler has made of honour, to the drop of quickly-cooled glass, which chemists have called Prince Rupert's drop, and which has long attracted their attention, in consequence of the particular quality described in the simile :—

“ Honour is like that glassy bubble  
Which gives <sup>1</sup> philosophers such trouble :  
Whose least part crack'd, the whole does fly ;  
And wits are crack'd to find out why.” <sup>2</sup>

Yet, truly accurate as it is, how absurd would such a simile have appeared in any other species of poetry than that, of which it is a part of the province to bring far-fetched images together !

The different degrees of the pleasure received from comparisons, as they appear to harmonize more or less with the natural influence of the principle of suggestion in spontaneous trains of thought, is finely shown in what has always appeared to me a very striking imperfection in one of the most popular stanzas of Gray's very popular Elegy. I quote also the two preceding stanzas :—

“ Perhaps, in this neglected spot is laid  
Some heart, once pregnant with celestial fire :  
Hands that the rod of empire might have sway'd,  
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre.  
But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page,  
Rich with the spoils of Time, did ne'er unroll ;

<sup>1</sup> That finds, Orig.

<sup>2</sup> Part II. canto ii. v. 385-388.

Chill Penury repressed their noble rage,  
And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem, of purest ray serene,  
The dark unfathom'd caves of Ocean bear ;  
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,  
And waste its sweetness on the desert air." <sup>1</sup>

The two similes in this stanza certainly produce very different degrees of poetic delight. That which is borrowed from the rose blooming in solitude pleases in a very high degree, both as it contains a just and beautiful similitude, and still more as the similitude is one the most likely to have arisen to a poetic mind in such a situation. But the simile in the first two lines of the stanza, though it may, perhaps, philosophically be as just, has no other charm, and strikes us immediately as not the natural suggestion of such a moment and such a scene. To a person moralizing amid the simple tombs of a village churchyard, there is perhaps no object that would not sooner have occurred than this piece of minute jewellery—a gem of purest ray serene in the unfathomed caves of ocean. When the analogies are suggested by surrounding objects, or by objects that harmonize with the surrounding scenery, they appear more natural, and therefore more pleasing. It is this which forms the principal charm of the separate stanzas of another very popular poem of a similar class, the Hermit of Dr Beattie, in which the moral allusions are all caught from objects that are represented as present to the eye or ear of the moralist. I confess, however, that, when the poem is read as a whole, the uniformity of the allusions, drawn from such a variety of objects to the single circumstance of man's mortality, gives an appearance of laborious

<sup>1</sup> V. 45-56.



in the same manner as if the analogy  
 were drawn from very remote objects. I select  
 the single stanza from the whole:—

"The landscape is lovely no more.  
 The woodland I mourn not for you;  
 The charms to restore,  
 The fragrant, and glittering with dew,  
 The winter I mourn.  
 The summer will save.  
 The mouldering urn?  
 The night of the grave?"<sup>1</sup>

We have seen how what an accession to our pleasure the suggesting principle of analogy has produced, in giving birth to the figurative language of poetry; and how necessary it is to have frequent recourse to this principle in laying down the general laws of philosophical criticism. But there is another class of more important analogies which we have not yet considered—those which form the powerful associations that direct the genius of scientific invention. These are the analogies of objects, considered as means of reference to a particular end. When a mechanist sees a machine, the parts of which all tend to one great ultimate effect, if he be blessed with inventive genius he will not merely see and comprehend the uses of the parts as they coöperate in the particular machine before him, but there will, perhaps, arise in his mind the idea of some power yet unapplied to the same purpose, some simpler process by which the ultimate effect may be augmented or improved, or at least obtained at less cost of time, or labour, or capital. When the crucible of the chemist presents to him some new result, and his first astonishment is over, there arise in his mind the ideas of pro-

<sup>1</sup> Stanza 4.

ducts, or operations, in some respects analogous, by the comparison of which he discovers some new element or combination of elements, and perhaps changes altogether the aspect of his science. A Newton sees an apple fall to the ground, and he discovers the system of the universe. In these cases, the principle of analogy, whether its operation be direct or indirect, is too forcible and too extensive in its sway to admit of much dispute. It is sufficient to know that, by the suggestions which it has afforded, to those whom Heaven has formed for the high destiny of constituting a part of that series of minds which spread from age to age the progress of improvement over all the regions and generations of mankind, we have risen to a degree of empire over nature, which, compared with our original imbecility, is a greater advance in the scale of being than that fabulous apotheosis which the ancient world conferred on its barbarous heroes.

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## LECTURE XXXVI.

*Primary Laws of Suggestion:—I. Resemblance, concluded.—  
II. Contrast.*

GENTLEMEN, a great part of my last Lecture was occupied in considering the influence of resemblance, as a connecting principle in our trains of thought. The illustrations of it which I used were chiefly of the rhetorical kind, which are, in themselves, most striking illustrations of the varieties of spontaneous suggestion, and which appeared to me peculiarly valuable, as enabling me to point out to what simple universal principles of the mental constitution even the

boldest figures of the rhetorician are to be traced. It is the same in these as in all the other products of human skill. The very arts which we seem to ourselves to create, as if it were in our power to add to nature, never can be anything more than forms which nature herself assumes. Whether the province be that of matter or of mind,—in the exercises of poetry and eloquence, and in the philosophic criticism which estimates the degrees of excellence displayed in these delightful combats of intellectual glory,—as in the works of a very different kind, which the mechanic ingenuity and labour of man devise and execute, what appears most artificial is nothing more than a skilful application of the simple laws of nature; of laws which we may apply, indeed, to our various purposes; and which some may know how to apply more successfully than others, but which are continually operating on matter and mind, independently of the applications which our skill may make of them.

In examining how much the suggesting principle is influenced by similarity, we considered first, that most direct and obvious resemblance which objects bear to each other in their sensible qualities. We then proceeded to consider the fainter indirect resemblance, which constitutes what is termed analogy, and we found that it is to this species of shadowy likeness that philosophy owes its accessions of power, and poetry its most attractive charms; since to the invention of the philosopher it suggests, in the contemplation of a single desired effect, all the variety of analogous means which may separately lead to the production of it, and to the fancy of the poet all that variety of kindred imagery and emotions, with which, by a sort of double transformation, he gives life to inani-



mate objects, and form, and colour, and substance, to every feeling of the soul.

There is another set of resemblances, not in the objects themselves, but in the mere arbitrary signs which express them, that have a powerful, though less obvious influence on suggestion, and often guide the trains of our thought without appearing to guide them.

It is, when we consider, indeed, what language truly is, not more wonderful that words as sounds, without regard to the sensible objects or abstract meanings denoted by them, should awaken in the mind the conception of similar sounds, than that one form or colour should be suggested by a similar form or colour; and, so arbitrary is language, that these mere verbal similarities do not, necessarily, involve similarities of meaning. On the contrary, the words which express different objects may have the most exact resemblance, though there may not be the slightest direct resemblance, nor even the faintest analogy, in the objects which the words denote. The new word, however, which some former word may have suggested, by its mere similarity in sound, is itself significant of some peculiar meaning. It, too, is a symbol, and as a symbol cannot be thus suggested, without exciting uniformly, or almost uniformly, and immediately, the conception of the thing signified; and hence, from the accidental agreement of their mere verbal signs, conceptions arise which otherwise would not have arisen, and, consequently, trains of reflection altogether different. Our thoughts, which usually govern our language, are themselves also in a great measure governed in this way, by that very language over which they seem to exercise unlimited command; so true, in more senses than one, is the observation of Lord Bacon, "*Credunt homines ratio-*

nem suam verbis imperare, sed fit etiam ut verba vim suam super rationem retorqueant." <sup>1</sup>

I do not speak at present, however, of the important influence which Bacon had particularly in view in these words; the influence of language, as the direct medium of thought, perpetuating, by habitual use, the prejudices involved in the original meaning of certain words, or by accidental association, conveying peculiar differences of meaning, to the minds of different individuals, and thus strengthening and fixing in each many separate prejudices, in addition to the general prejudices of mankind. This permanent influence of language, as tinging with its peculiar colours the thought of which it is the medium, though we may not feel it in the particular cases in which it modifies our own judgments, we know, at least, to be very powerful; because we are sufficiently quick-sighted to discover its influence on the minds of those who are opposed to us in opinion; every one, in the intercourse of society, thus serving as a mirror to show, to every one besides, the principles of fallacy in his own mental constitution, which are truly in himself, though he cannot perceive them but as they are reflected from others.

We have, however, too many mirrors of this kind around us, not to have some slight fear at least, that the prejudices of language, as the direct medium of thought, may be exercising their universal dominion even on ourselves, the *least fallible* of the multitude; but we pay little attention in general, and even philosophers have scarcely attended to that indirect, though not less real influence of language, to which I at present allude,—the influence which it indirectly ac-

<sup>1</sup> Nov. Org. Lib. I. Aph. lix.

quires, as a series of sounds, suggesting each other in succession, by their own similarities, independently of any relations that may subsist in the objects which they denote, and independently, too, of those general habits, or accidental and limited associations, of which Bacon speaks. Similar sounds suggest, by their mere similarity, similar sounds; and the words thus suggested awaken the conceptions which they are accustomed to represent,—and, consequently, the whole train of thoughts and images associated with these conceptions, which would not have arisen but for the accidental resemblance of one symbol to another. That such verbal suggestions should frequently occur, we might presume, *a priori*, from our knowledge of the general principles of association. But the influence which this symbolic resemblance has on our looser train of silent thought, is, perhaps, far greater than we conceive it to be. There is, indeed, a very obvious reason that it should appear to us less than it truly is.

When a word is once suggested by its syllabic resemblance, and, consequently, the image which that new word denotes, the mind is so quick to perceive a relation of some sort among almost all the objects which can be presented to it, that it readily discovers some relation between the new image and those which preceded it; and though it was truly the resemblance of mere sound which suggested it, independently of the relation, which may be discovered after it is suggested, the feeling of this relation seems of itself, when we look back, sufficient to account for the suggestion. We think of this, therefore, as the cause, since it can be made to harmonize, in some measure, with our thought itself, and disregard that mere verbal influence, in which, and in which alone, the sug-



gestion had its origin. It is only where the direct verbal suggestion is rendered more apparent, by the strange incongruity of the images which the similar sounds chance to denote, as in the case of puns, that we readily ascribe the suggestion to the word, and not to the thought itself. Even in the case of puns, it is only to the few, in which the contrast of meaning is very striking, that we pay any attention. How many words of similar sound arise in the mind by this species of suggestion, which are never uttered as puns, but pass silently away, because they are felt to be without that happy ambiguity, or opposition of meaning, which alone could reconcile the hearer to this petty species of wit.

Next to this petty species of wit, as a proof of the influence of mere verbal similarities of sound in suggestion, may be mentioned the connecting influence of rhyme. That, in rhyme, sound suggests sound, and consequently operates indirectly on the train of thought by this mere symbolic resemblance, there can be no question, since rhyme itself is but the recurrence of such similar sounds at regular or irregular intervals; and to these recurring sounds, it is very evident that the strain of thought must be in a considerable degree subservient, however independent of it it may seem. I need not quote to you the simile of Butler, so often quoted on this subject, in which he compares rhyme, in its influence on verse, to the rudder, which, though in the rear of the vessel, and apparently following its direction, directs the track which the vessel itself is to pursue; but there can be no doubt as to the reality of the influence exercised on the whole verse, by these final words,—the monotonous syllables,—of which the office has been said to be nothing more than the very humble one of standing,

"like watchmen at the close,  
To keep the verse from being prose."

On first consideration it might seem, that, in the use of rhyme, the necessity under which the poet is placed of accommodating his strain of thought to resemblances of sound that have themselves no peculiar relation to one thought more than to another, and the frequent sacrifices which may therefore be required of him, must be unfavourable to the sentiment of the verse, whatever accession of pleasure it may or may not be supposed to give to the melody. That it must occasionally render some sacrifices unavoidable, and thus sometimes deprive the reader of expressions more powerful in themselves than the tamer phrases, which alone admit of being accommodated to some obstinate and intractable rhyme, is indeed true. Yet the influence of this constraint is, perhaps, upon the whole, far from unfavourable to the sentiment, giving more than it takes away. For how many of the most beautiful thoughts and images of poetry are we indebted to these final sounds, which suggest each other by their accidental resemblances; and which, merely by obliging the poet to pause till he can accommodate the verse, with perfect propriety of sentiment and measure, to the imperious necessity of the rhyme, bring before him, during this interval, a greater variety of images, from which to make his selection, than would have occurred to his rapid invention and too easy acquiescence, if he had not been under the same unavoidable restraint. In this respect, the shackles of rhyme have often been compared to the fetters of the actor; which, instead of truly embarrassing his movements, and giving him less pomp and consequence in the eyes of those who gaze on him, only make him toss his arms with more

impetuous action, and tread the stage with greater majesty.

An influence on the successions of our thought,—similar to that of the concluding syllables of verse,—is exercised by the initial sounds of words in alliteration. How readily suggestions of this kind occur, so as to modify indirectly the train of images and feelings in the mind, and what pleasure they afford when they seem to have arisen without effort, is marked by the tendency to alliteration which is so prevalent, not in the poetry merely, but still more in the traditionary proverbs of every country. In like manner, when names are to be coupled in the fictions of romance, and when many names seem equal in every other respect, this alliterative resemblance is very frequently, to use Leibnitz's phrase, the sufficient reason which directs the author's choice. In the works of a single novelist, for example, how much more readily do the names Roderick Random, Peregrine Pickle, Ferdinand Count Fathom, seem to join together, than if the same names had been differently arranged, in any transposition which we could make of them.

It is in verse, however, and particularly in the lighter species of verse, that the charm of alliteration is most powerfully felt. I scarcely need repeat to you any examples, to prove what you must often have experienced:—

“But thousands die, without or this or that;  
Die, and endow a college, or a cat.”<sup>1</sup>

“Fill but his purse, our poet's work is done;  
Alike to him, by pathos or by pun.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Moral Essays, Ep. III. v. 95, 96.

<sup>2</sup> Imitations of Horace, Book II. Ep. I. v. 294, 295.—“Their purse,” and “them.”—Orig.



"Or her whose life the church and scandal share ;  
For ever in a passion, or a prayer."<sup>1</sup>

—"Many a German Prince is worse,  
Who, proud of pedigree, is poor of purse."<sup>2</sup>

In these lines of Pope, it is impossible not to feel the force of the alliteration, and the additional prominence and sharpness which it seems to give to every point of the thought and expression.

It may be remarked, however, that though the alliteration itself consists only in the similarity of sounds,—which must, of course, be the same, whatever be the meaning of the particular words, it is by no means indifferent as to the effect produced, on what words of the sentence the alliteration is made to fall. Unless where it is intended for producing or augmenting imitative harmony by its redoubled sounds,—which may be considered as forming a class apart,—it is never so powerful as when it falls on words which, together with the similarity of sound, have either a great similarity or a great discrepancy of meaning, harmonizing, as it were, with those other principles of resemblance or contrast, which, of themselves, might have been sufficient to produce the particular suggestion. Thus, in the very alliterative line in the Rape of the Lock, which describes the furniture of Belinda's toilet,—

"Puffs, powders, patches, Bibles, billets-doux ;"<sup>3</sup>—

the alliteration in the former half of the verse is of words which express things similar,—that in the latter part, of words which express things discrepant. The

<sup>1</sup> Moral Essays, Ep. II. v. 105, 106.

<sup>2</sup> Imitations of Horace, Ep. VI. v. 83, 84.

<sup>3</sup> Canto I. v. 138.

contrast produced by the ideas of Bibles and billets-doux, gives more pleasure, by the agreement which the alliteration points out of things that are in other respects so opposite. It is the same in the case of the passion and the prayer, the college and the cat, and in most of those happy alliterations which are to be found in the satirical or playful verses of this powerful master of all the art of verse. The alliteration of words that express opposite ideas is, in truth, a species of wit,—as far as the pleasure of wit consists in the sudden discovery of unexpected resemblances,—and approaches very nearly the nature of a pun ; combined, at the same time, with the pleasure which the ludicrous antithesis of the objects themselves would have produced even without alliteration. To the other half of the line,—“Puffs, powders, patches,”—the same remark does not apply. Yet the pleasure, in this instance, is not produced merely by the occurrence of similar sounds. It arises also, in part, from the discovery of a new and different resemblance, in things of which all the similarities were before supposed to be known. In this, too, the effect of the alliteration is very nearly similar to that of a pun ; and it is, in truth, a pun of letters, as puns, conversely, may be said to imply an alliteration of whole words. In both cases, whether the resemblance be in the whole word, as in the pun, or only in a part of the word, as in alliteration, the suggestion may be considered as a decisive proof of the influence which is exercised over our trains of thought by the mere accident of the agreement of arbitrary sounds.

In treating of the pleasure which we receive from comparisons in poetry, I remarked, how evidently we still have in view the source of such comparisons, in the spontaneous suggestion of similar objects by simi-

lar objects; and how much, therefore, our pleasure is lessened, when the simile, though perhaps sufficiently exact in that analogy which it is intended to express, appears of a kind, which, in the circumstances described, could not be supposed naturally to have arisen to the conception of the individual who uses it. It is the same with that resemblance of mere syllabic sound which we are now considering. It must appear to have its source in spontaneous suggestion, or it ceases to give pleasure. On this account chiefly it is, that alliteration, which delights us when sparingly used, becomes offensive when frequently repeated in any short series of lines; not because any one of the reduplications of sound would itself be less pleasing if it had not been preceded by others, than those others which preceded it, but because the frequent recurrence of it shows too plainly, that the alliteration has been studiously sought. The suggesting principle, as I have already remarked, is not confined to one set of objects, or to a few; and, though similarity of mere initial sound be one of the relations according to which suggestion may take place, it is far from being the most powerful or constant one. A few syllabic or literal resemblances are, therefore, what may be expected very naturally to occur, particularly in those lighter trains of thought in which there is no strong emotion to modify the suggestion, in permanent relation to one prevailing sentiment. But a series of alliterative phrases is inconsistent with the natural variety of the suggesting principle. It implies a labour of search and selection, and a labour which it is not pleasing to contemplate, because it is employed on an object too trifling to give it interest.

In the early ages of verse, indeed, when the skill that is admired must be a species of skill that requires



no great refinement to discover it, this very appearance of labour is itself a charm. A never-ceasing alliteration, as it presents a difficulty of which all can readily judge, is, in this period of rude discernment, an obvious mode of forcing admiration; very much in the same way as the feats of a rope-dancer or a tumbler never fail to give greater pleasure to a child, and to the vulgar, who in their tastes are always children, than the most graceful attitudes of the dancer in all his harmony of movement, who does, perhaps, what no one else is capable of doing, but who seems to do it in a way which every one may try to imitate, and who is truly most inimitable when he seems to show how very easy it is to execute all the wonders which he performs. Accordingly we find, in the history of our own poetry, and in the poetry of many semibarbarous nations, that frequent alliteration has been held to be a requisite of verse as indispensable as the metrical pauses on which its melody depends. With the refinement of taste, however, this passion for coarse difficulty subsides; and we begin at last to require, not merely that difficulty should be overcome, but that the labour of overcoming the difficulty should be hid from us, with a care at least equal to that which was used in overcoming it.

All that is truly marvellous in art is thus augmented, indeed, rather than lessened. But it is no longer art that must present itself: it is nature only;—"artis est celare artem;"—and that nature to which we look in all the finer intellectual arts, as to the genius which animates them, is the knowledge and observance of the principle which we are considering,—the accordance which we feel of every sentiment, and image, and expression, with those laws of spontaneous suggestion in the mind, which seem as if, in the circum-

stances represented, they might almost, without the assistance of any art, have produced of themselves whatever we admire.

We know too well the order of this spontaneous suggestion, not to feel, when this alliteration is very frequently repeated, the want of the natural flow of thought, and consequently, the labour which must have been used in the search of sounds that were to be forced reluctantly together. There is no longer any pleasure felt, therefore; or, if any pleasure be felt, it is of a kind totally different from that which gives an additional charm to the easy flow of verse when the alliteration is sparingly used. There is a poem of some hundred lines, in regular hexameter verse,—the *Pugna Porcorum, per Publium Porcium, Poetam*,—in which there is not a single word introduced that does not begin with the letter *P*. But what is the pleasure which the foolish ingenuity of such a poem affords? and who is there who could have patience sufficient to read the whole of it aloud, or even to read the whole of it inwardly? As a specimen, I may quote to you a few lines,—which are, perhaps, as many as you can bear with patience,—containing a part of the speech of the Proconsul Porcorum, in which he endeavours to win over the younger Pigs to peace:—

“Propterea properans Proconsul, poplite prono,  
Præcipitem Plebem, pro patrum pace poposeit.  
Persta paulisper, pubes preciosa! precamur.  
Pensa profectum parvum pugne peragendæ.  
Plures plorabant, postquàm præcelsa premetur  
Prelatura patrum, porcelli percutientur  
Passim, posteaquam pingues porci periere.  
Propterea petimus, præsentem ponite pugnam,  
Per pia Porcorum petimas penetralia,” &c.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> V. 41-49.

This, it is evident, is the very vaulting, and tumbling, and rope-dancing of poetry; and any coarse pleasure which we may receive from it, when we hear or read a part of it for the first time, is not the pleasure of verse, but a pleasure which the wise, indeed, may feel, but which is very much akin to the mere clownish wonderment that fixes the whole village in the rural fair around the stage of some itinerant tumbler or fire-eater. The *Pugna Porcorum* is not the only long piece of perfect alliteration. A similar poem was addressed to Charles the Bald, of which every word, in compliment to the monarch, began with his own initial letter *C*. So various, in all ages, have been these *difficiles nugæ*, this *labor ineptiarum*, as Martial calls them, that poems have been written, deriving their principal, or probably their only recommendation, from a quality the very opposite to that which conferred so unenviable an immortality on the busy idleness of the *Pugna Porcorum*. The labour of the poems, to which I now allude, was not to repeat, but to exclude altogether a particular letter, on which account their authors were termed *Leipogrammatists*. Thus, we hear of a Greek *Iliad*, from the first book of which the letter *Alpha* was excluded; from the second the letter *B*, and so on through the whole books of the *Iliad* and letters of the alphabet. The same species of laborious trifling, by the report of the traveller Chardin, appears to have prevailed in Persia. One of the poets of that country had the honour of reading to his sovereign a poem, in which no admission had been allowed to the letter *A*. The king, who was tired of listening, and whose weariness had probably too good a cause, returned the poet thanks, and expressed his very great approbation of his omission of the letter *A*; but



added, that in his opinion, the poem might, perhaps, have been better still, if he had only taken the trouble to omit, at the same time, all the other letters of the alphabet.

In all these cases of studious alliteration, positive or negative, it is very evident that the natural course of the suggesting principle must have been checked, and checked almost incessantly; and the constraint and irksomeness which this constant effort involves, are thus every moment forced upon us, till we feel more sympathy with the weariness of the artist, than admiration of the power with which he has been able to struggle through his painful task. We love, indeed, in works of genius, strains of exalted sentiment, and successions of bright and glowing imagery, which are beyond the ordinary suggestions of our own mind; but, even in the very majesty of all that is sublime, or in that transcendent and overwhelming tenderness which is itself but a softer species of sublimity, while we yield with more than admiration to the grandeur or the pathos, we still love them to harmonize with the universal principles on which the spontaneous suggestions of our own humbler thoughts depend. When they do so harmonize, we feel what we read or hear, almost as if it had arisen in our mind, by the principle of spontaneous suggestion, which we know that we partake, in its general tendencies, with the very genius which we revere; and this identity which we love to feel, with everything that interests us, as it constitutes in a great measure the charm of our moral sympathy, has also, I conceive, no small influence on the kindred emotions of taste, constituting a great portion of the pleasure which we derive from the contemplation of works of art. The genius which commands our applause is still the

genius of man ; of a being who perceives, remembers reasons, and exercises every function of which we are conscious in ourselves. "Homines sumus ; humani nihil alienum." We feel, therefore, that it is not our admiration only that connects us with the works which we admire, but the very faculties which have produced those admirable results. We see our common nature reflected, and reflected with a beauty of which we were not sensible before ; and while thought succeeds thought, and image rises upon image, according to laws of succession which we have been accustomed to recognise in the trains of our own fancy, these thoughts and images are, as it were, for the moment ours ; and we have only the delightful impression that we are of a race of nobler beings than we conceived. This delightful identification, however, lasts only as long as the thoughts and images, that are presented to us, arise in the order in which nature might have spontaneously presented them to our own mind. When there is any obvious and manifest violation of the natural course of suggestion, as there must be when the labour of the composition is brought before us, this illusion of identity is dissolved. It is no longer our common nature which we feel ; but the toil and constraint which are peculiar to the individual, and which separate him, for the time, from our sympathy. The work of labour seems instantly something insulated and detached, which we cannot identify with our own spontaneous thought ; and we feel for it that coldness which, by the very constitution of our nature, it is impossible for us not to feel, with respect to everything which is absolutely foreign.

After these remarks on the influence of the various species of resemblance, in the objects themselves, in

the analogy of some of their qualities, and in the arbitrary symbols which denote them, I proceed to consider the force of contrast as a suggesting principle. I consider it at present as forming a class apart, for the same reason which has led me, in these illustrations of the general principle, to class separately the suggestions of resemblance, though I conceive that all, or at least the greater number of them, on a more subtle analysis, might be reduced to the more comprehensive influence of former proximity.

Of this influence, whether direct or indirect, in contrast, the memory of every one must present him with innumerable instances. The palace and the cottage, the cradle and the grave, the extremes of indigence and of luxurious splendour, are not connected in artificial antitheses only, but arise, in ready succession, to the observer of either. Of all moral reflections, none are so universal as those which are founded on the instability of mortal distinctions, the sudden reverses of fortune, the frailty of beauty, the precariousness of life itself, all which reflections are manifestly the result of that species of suggestion which we are considering: for the very notion of instability implies the previous conception of that state of decay which is opposite to the flourishing state observed by us. If we see the imperial victor moving along, in all the splendour of majesty and conquest, we must have thought of sudden disaster, before we can moralize on the briefness of earthly triumph. If we see beauty, and youth, and joy, and health, on the cheek, we must have thought of age, or sickness, or misfortune, before we can look on it with sorrowful tenderness. This transition in our trains of thought, from one extreme to its opposite, is perhaps a happy contrivance of nature for tempering excess of emotion,



by interrupting the too long continuance of trains of any kind. It must occasionally produce some little tendency to salutary reflection, even in "the gay licentious proud," who are fated, by their situation, to "dance along" through life, though it is certainly not on them, but on those by whom they are surrounded, that its beneficial influence most fully operates. This natural tendency is, in truth, what the lyre of Timotheus is represented to have been in Dryden's Ode, when, with a sudden change of subject, he checked the too triumphant exultation of the conqueror of Darius:—

"With downcast looks, the joyless victor sat,  
Revolving in his alter'd soul  
The various turns of chance below ;  
And, now and then, a sigh he stole ;  
And tears began to flow."<sup>1</sup>

I cannot help thinking, in like manner, that the everlasting tendency to hope,—that only happiness of the wretched, which no circumstances of adverse fortune, not even the longest oppression of unchanging misery can wholly subdue,—derives much of its energy from this principle. The mere force of contrast must often bring before the imagination circumstances of happier fortune, and images of past delight. These very images, indeed, are sad, in some respects, especially when they first arise and co-exist, as it were, with the images of misery which produced them, so as to present only the mortifying feeling of the loss which has been suffered ; but they cannot long be present to the mind, without gradually awakening trains of their own, and, in some degree, the emotions with which they were before associated,—emotions

<sup>1</sup> Alexander's Feast, stanza iv. v. 10-23.

which dispose the mind more readily to the belief, that the circumstances which have been, may yet again recur. It is, at least, not unsuitable to the goodness of that mighty Being who has arranged the wonderful faculties of man, in adaptation to the circumstances in which he was to be placed, that he should thus have formed us to conceive hope, where hope is most needed, and provided an eternal source of comfort, in the very excess of misery itself.

Much of the painful retrospection, and, therefore, of the salutary influence of conscience, may arise, in like manner, from the force of this suggesting principle, which must frequently recall the security and happiness of the past, by the very anguish of the present, and which, thus, though it cannot restore innocence itself, may at least, by the images which it awakes, soften the mind to that repentance which is almost innocence under another form.

There is a passage, in the only remaining oration of the younger Pliny, that expresses strongly the power which the associating principle of contrast holds over the conscience of the guilty. It is in the Panegyric of Trajan, an emperor of whom it has been said, that, to deserve the magnificent eulogium pronounced on him, the only merit wanting to him was that of not being a hearer of it. The Panegyric is unquestionably written with much eloquence, and is not the less impressive from those circumstances which give occasion to a very just remark,—“that the Romans have in it the air of slaves, scarcely escaped from their chains; who are astonished at their own liberty, and feel grateful to their master that he does not think proper to crush them, but deigns to count them in the rank of men.” “*Merenti gratias agere facile est,*” says Pliny, “*non enim periculum est, ne cùm loquar de*

NUMEROSI. CAPTOOTAT SIBI SUPERBIAM CREDIT: CUM  
 DE INFERENTIA INFERIAN. CUM DE CLEMENTIA, CRUELI-  
 TATE. CUM DE INCREDULAT. AVARITIAM: CUM DE BENI-  
 GNITATE INVOLEN. CUM DE CONTINENTIA. LIBIDINEM: CUM  
 DE ADUO. INERTIAM. CUM DE TORTITUDINE. TIMOREM.<sup>21</sup> In  
 this MISERY 1. TIMES THAT HAD SCARCELY PASSED AWAY,  
 WAS. A SECOND PICTURE IS PRESENTED TO US, OF THAT  
 DESPOTISM WHICH NOT SATISFIED WITH THE UNLIMITED  
 POWER OF DOING EVIL WAS STILL GREEDY OF THE PRAISE OF  
 GOD. WHICH IT DESPISED, AND OF WHICH IT DREADED TO  
 DEAR IN VERY NAME. EVER WHILE IT LISTENED TO THE  
 FORCEFUL EULOGIUM. AND NOW STILL MORE SAD A PICTURE  
 DOES IT AFFORD, OF THAT SERVILE COWARDICE WHICH WAS  
 DOOMED WITH REAL KNEE, BUT WITH TREMBLING TONGUE,  
 TO PAY THE PERILOUS TAX OF ADULATION.—“CUM DICERE  
 QUOD VALDES PERICULOSUM: QUOD NOLLES. MISERUM ESSET;”  
 —THAT REGIM. OF TERROR, AND BATTERY, AND CONFISCATION, AND  
 GRIEVANCE. WHEN TO BORROW THE ELOQUENT DESCRIPTION WHICH  
 A PANEGYRIST OF THEODOSIUS HAS GIVEN US OF A SIMILAR  
 PERIOD, WITH EVERY MISERY AROUND, THERE WAS STILL ADDED  
 THE GREAUFUL NECESSITY OF APPEARING TO REJOICE, THE IN-  
 FORMER WANDERING TO MAKE DOWN COUNTENANCES, AND  
 CALUMNIATE LOOKS AND GLANCES: THE PLUNDERED CITIZEN  
 DRIVEN FROM OPULENCE INTO SUDDEN POVERTY, FEARFUL OF  
 SEEMING SAD BECAUSE THERE WAS YET LEFT TO HIM LIFE;  
 AND HE WHOSE BROTHER HAD BEEN ASSASSINATED NOT DARING  
 TO APPEAR IN THE DRESS OF MOURNING, BECAUSE HE HAD  
 STILL A SON.

Alas! in such times eloquence could be nothing  
 more than what it was said to be for many ages of  
 national servitude; “the unhappy art of exaggera-  
 ting a few feeble virtues, or of disguising atrocious  
 crimes.” “Tristis illa facundiae ancillantibus necessitas,  
 cum truce dominum auras omnes plausum publi-

<sup>21</sup> Sect. IV. p. 6. Edit. Venet. 1728.



corum ventosa popularitate captantem, mendax ad-  
sentatio titillabat, cum gratias agebant dolentes,—et  
tyrannum non prædicasse tyrannidis accusatio voca-  
batur.”<sup>1</sup> Yet it is pleasing to think, that, in the long  
detail of praises which were addressed to guilty power,  
that suggesting principle which we are considering  
must often have exerted its influence, and in spite of  
all the artifices of the orator to veil, under magnif-  
cence of language, that hateful form of virtue which  
he was under the necessity of presenting, must some-  
times have forced upon the conscience of the tyrant  
the feeling of what he was, by the irresistible contrast  
of the picture of what he was not.

It is this tendency of the mind, to pass readily from  
opposites to opposites, which renders natural the rhe-  
torical figure of antithesis. When skilfully and spar-  
ingly used, it is unquestionably a figure of great power,  
from the impression of astonishment which the rapid  
succession of contrasted objects must always produce.  
The infinity of worlds, and the narrow spot of earth  
which we call our country, or our home; the eternity  
of ages, and the few hours of life; the Almighty power  
of God, and human nothingness: it is impossible to  
think of these in succession without a feeling like that  
which is produced by the sublimest eloquence. This  
very facility, however, of producing astonishment at  
little cost of real eloquence, renders the antithesis the  
most dangerous and seductive of all figures to a young  
orator. It is apt to introduce a symmetry of arrange-  
ment, in which scarcely an object is brought forward  
that has not to run a parallel of all its qualities with the  
qualities of some other object, till even contrast itself  
becomes monotonous and uniform by the very frequency  
of opposition. The thoughts and sentences are so

<sup>1</sup> Pacati Panegyri., Sect. II.

nically tallied as to be like pieces of Dutch gardening, where

“Half the platform just reflects the other.”<sup>1</sup>

It is not so that nature operates. She gives variety to the field of our thought, in the same manner as she diversifies her own romantic scenery. Now and then, on the banks of her rivers, rock answers to rock, and foliage to foliage; but, when we look along the wide magnificence of her landscapes, we discover that still, as in that “wilderness of sweets,” which Milton describes, she continues “to wanton as in her prime, and play at will—wild, without rule or art.” It is the same in the field of our associations. Sometimes she presents objects together, in exact proportion of resemblance or contrast; but more frequently she groups them according to other relations, especially according to their former accidental concurrence in time or place, and thus communicates, if I may so express it, to the scenery of our thought, that very variety which she spreads over external things.

In the use of antithesis, then, as much as in the use of the other rhetorical forms of thought and expression before considered by us, it is in the general nature of spontaneous suggestion that we have to find the principle which is to direct us. Contrast is one of the forms of this suggestion; and occasional antithesis is therefore pleasing; but it is only one of the occasional forms of suggestion; and therefore frequent antithesis is not pleasing but offensive. Our taste requires that the series of thoughts and images presented to us should be exquisite in kind; but, even when they are most exquisite, it requires that, without any obtrusive appearance of labour, they should seem to have risen.

<sup>1</sup> Pope's Moral Essays, Ep. IV. v. 118.

as it were, spontaneously, and to have been only the perfection of the natural order of thought.

I shall proceed, in my next Lecture, to the consideration of *nearness in place or time* as an associating principle.

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### LECTURE XXXVII.

*Of Nearness in Place or Time, as modifying Suggestion—  
Secondary Laws of Suggestion.*

GENTLEMEN, the influence of the direct resemblances of objects, on the suggestions which constitute our trains of thought, having been considered by us in a former Lecture, I proceeded, in my last Lecture, to point out and illustrate the influence of another species of resemblance, which is not in the objects themselves, but in the mere signs that express them. As similar forms and colours suggest similar forms and colours, so do similar words mutually suggest each other; and the words thus suggested exciting the corresponding conceptions of which they are significant, a new train of thought may thus be introduced by the mere arbitrary resemblance of one symbolic sound to another. This influence of mere sounds in modifying suggestion, though, from circumstances which I pointed out, unremarked by us in many cases in which its influence is, probably, very powerful, is too striking in some cases not to force our attention. I availed myself, therefore, chiefly of these more striking cases, illustrating it particularly by the examples of puns and rhymes, and alliteration; and endeavouring at the same time to show you how exactly the principles of taste, in refer-



ence to these, as pleasing or unpleasing, have regard to their accordance or obvious unaccordance, with the natural order of spontaneous suggestion.

I then proceeded to consider the influence of contrast on the tendencies of suggestion, illustrating this by various examples, and pointing out to you, particularly, some moral advantages, of which I conceived these rapid transitions of thought to be productive—advantages not more important to our virtue than to our serenity in happiness, and to our comfort in sorrow.

I proceed now to the consideration of nearness in place or time—the next general circumstance which I pointed out as modifying suggestion.

Of all the general principles of connexion in the trains of our thought, this is evidently the most frequent and extensive in its operation; even when we confine our attention to its grosser and more obvious forms, without attempting, by any very refined analysis, to reduce to it any of the other tribes of our suggestions. The gross and obvious nearness in place or time, of which alone I speak when I use Mr Hume's phrase of contiguity, forms the whole calendar of the great multitude of mankind, who pay little attention to the arbitrary eras of chronology, but date events by each other, and speak of what happened in the time of some persecution, or rebellion, or great war, or frost, or famine. Even with those who are more accustomed to use, on great occasions, the stricter dates of months and years, this association of events, as near to each other, forms the great bond for uniting in the memory those multitudes of scattered facts which form the whole history of domestic life, and which it would have been impossible to remember by their separate relation to some insulated point of time.

It is the same with nearness in place. To think of one part of a familiar landscape is to recall the whole. The hill, the grove, the church, the river, the bridge, and all the walks which lead to them, rise before us in immediate succession. On this species of local relation chiefly have been founded those systems of artificial memory which at different periods have been submitted to the world, and which, whatever perfections or imperfections they may possess in other respects, certainly demonstrate very powerfully, by the facilities of remembrance which they afford, the influence that is exercised by mere order in place, on the trains of our suggestion. From neighbouring place to place our thought wanders readily, with a sort of untaught geography; and, but for this connecting principle, not even the labour of the longest life could have fixed in our mind the simple knowledge of that science. If the idea of the river Nile had been as quick to arise on our conception of Greenland as on that of Egypt, and the Pyrenees, instead of suggesting the conterminous countries of France and Spain, had suggested to us equally at random, China and New Holland, and Lapland and Morocco, it is evident that, however intently and frequently we might have traced on our maps every boundary of every province of every nation on our globe, all would have been, in our mind, one mingled chaos of cities and streams and mountains. Every physical science would have been in like manner beyond our reach; since all are founded on the suggestion of the common antecedent events, together with their common consequents, in their regular order of proximity. The most powerful illustration, however, of the influence of co-existence or proximity in associating ideas, is the command acquired by the weak infant mind over all the complicated machinery of

language. The thing signified recalls the sign, and conversely the sign the thing signified, because both have been repeatedly at the same moment presented to the senses; and though it would be too much to say, with the emperor Charles the Fifth, that a man is as many times a man as he has acquired different languages, we may still say, with great truth, that we should scarcely have been men at all if we had not possessed the power of acquiring at least one language.

What a striking picture of this local connexion of feelings is presented by the state of Europe at the time of the Crusades!

— Banditti haunt disturbing distant lands,  
And unknown nations wandering for a home! ”<sup>1</sup>

What was the interest which then roused, and led for the first time to one great general object, so many warring tribes, who had till then never thought of each other but with mutual animosity, and which brought forward the feudal slave with his feudal tyrant, not, as before, to be his blind and devoted instrument of vengeance or rapacity, but to share with perfect equality the same common passion with his lord?

It certainly was not the rescue of a few rocks or plains from the offspring of the invaders who had subdued them—it was for the delivery of that land, to which local conceptions associated with it gave a value that could not be measured with any calculations of wealth, or people, or territory;—for that land, which, trod by prophets, and consecrated by the display of the power and the sufferings of the great Being whom they worshipped as the founder of their faith, presented in almost every step the vestige of a miracle. The belief of wonders, which were said to be still performed

<sup>1</sup> Thomson's Poems; Liberty, Part IV. v. 86, 87.



there, might concur to raise the importance of the holy sepulchre, and to augment the general devotion,—if, indeed, this very belief itself was not, in its origin, referable to the same cause which gave interest to the scene, being only another form of that lively emotion which must have been felt by those who visited it, and who thought of *Him* whom the sepulchre had enclosed, and of the miracles which he had wrought. The sepulchre itself was thus, as it were, mingled with the very image of its divine tenant; and it was only a natural result of the influence of this contiguity, that the wonder-working power, which was known to have been exercised by the one, should have been felt as in some measure a part of the other. The very ardour of emotion, which could not fail to be excited on the first visit to such a spot, would aid this illusion; as it would seem like a sudden inspiration from that awful presence which, in the liveliness of the conception excited, was felt as if still hovering around the place. To think of the presence of that Being, however, was to recognise the power by which miracles were actually performed; and, with such an impression, it was scarcely possible to return from the pilgrimage, without the belief of a sort of holiness derived from it; as if nothing could be impure which had come from the presence of its God.

After this statement and illustration of various relations, by which, without the renewal of perception, the mere conception of one object is sufficient to awaken the conception of many others that are said to be associated with it, an inquiry very naturally presents itself, which yet seems to have been unaccountably neglected by philosophers. If there be various relations, according to which these parts of our trains of thought may succeed each other,—if the

and I can recall to me the person who suggested he first saw painted it, and the person who suggested to me the room in which it was painted, and the series of portraits of which it formed a part, and perhaps many circumstances and events that have been incidentally connected with it. I do not suggest to me these conceptions rather than the others. The subject of the suggestion is never sufficient to show that the laws of suggestion as a process of the mind are not confined merely to the relations of the successive feelings, in which case the suggestion would be uniform; but that, though these may be regulated by primary laws, there must be some other circumstances which modify their peculiar influence at different times and in different persons, and which may therefore be denominated secondary laws of suggestion. To the investigation of the secondary laws, then, is not less important than the primary I have proposed.

After the remarks which I have already frequently made on this subject, I trust it is now unnecessary for me to repeat that the term *law*, as employed in the proper character of matter or of mind, is not used to denote any thing different from the phenomena themselves. That in short it means nothing more than certain circumstances of general agreement in any series of phenomena. When Mr Hume reduced, to the three orders of resemblance, contiguity, and causation, the relations on which he believed association to depend, he considered himself as stating only facts which were before familiar to every one, and did state only facts that were perfectly familiar. In like manner, when I reduce under a few heads those modifying circumstances, which seem to me as

secondary laws, to guide, in every particular case, the momentary direction of the primary, my object is not to discover facts that are new, or little observed, but to arrange facts that, separately, are well known.

The first circumstance which presents itself, as modifying the influence of the primary laws, in inducing one ~~associate~~ conception rather than another, is the length of time during which the original feelings from which they flowed, continued, when they co-existed, or succeeded each other. Every one must be conscious, that innumerable objects pass before him, which are slightly observed at the time, but which form no permanent associations in the mind. The longer we dwell on objects, the more fully do we rely on our future remembrance of them.

In the second place, the parts of a train appear to be more closely and firmly associated, as the original feelings have been more lively. We remember brilliant objects more than those which are faint and obscure. We remember, for our whole lifetime, the occasions of great joy or sorrow; we forget the occasions of innumerable slight pleasures or pains, which occur to us every hour. That strong feeling of interest and curiosity, which we call attention, not only leads us to dwell longer on the consideration of certain objects, but also gives more vivacity to the objects on which we dwell,—and in both these ways tends, as we have seen, to fix them more strongly in the mind.

In the third place, the parts of any train are more readily suggested, in proportion as they have been more frequently renewed. It is thus we remember, after reading them three or four times over, the verses which we could not repeat when we had read them only once.



In the fourth place, the feelings are connected more strongly, in proportion as they are more or less recent. Immediately after reading any single line of poetry, we are able to repeat it, though we may have paid no particular attention to it; in a very few minutes, unless when we have paid particular attention to it, we are no longer able to repeat it accurately, and in a very short time we forget it altogether. There is, indeed, one very striking exception to this law, in the case of old age: for, events which happened in youth, are then remembered, when events of the year preceding are forgotten. Yet, even in the case of extreme age, when the time is not extended so far back, the general law still holds; and events which happened a few hours before are remembered, when there is total forgetfulness of what happened a few days before.

In the fifth place, our successive feelings are associated more closely, as each has co-existed less with other feelings. The song, which we have never heard but from one person, can scarcely be heard again by us, without recalling that person to our memory; but there is obviously much less chance of this particular suggestion, if we have heard the same air and words frequently sung by others.

In the sixth place, the influence of the primary laws of suggestion is greatly modified by original constitutional differences, whether these are to be referred to the mind itself, or to varieties of bodily temperament. Such constitutional differences affect the primary laws in two ways,—first, by augmenting and extending the influence of all of them, as in the varieties of the general power of remembering, so observable in different individuals. Secondly, they modify the influence of the primary laws, by giving

greater proportional vigour to one set of tendencies of suggestion than to another. It is in this modification of the suggesting principle, and the peculiar suggestions to which it gives rise, that I conceive the chief part, or, I may say, the whole of what is truly called genius, to consist. We have already seen that the primary tendencies of suggestion are of various species,—some, for example, arising from mere analogy, others from direct contiguity or nearness in time or place, of the very objects themselves; and it is this difference of the prevailing tendency, as to these two species of suggestions, which I conceive to constitute all that is inventive in genius;—invention consisting in the suggestions of analogy, as opposed to the suggestions of grosser contiguity.

In the mind of one poet, for example, the conception of his subject awakens only such images as he had previously seen combined with it in the works of others; and he is thus fated, by his narrow and unvarying range of suggestion, only to add another name to the eternal list of imitators. In a poetic mind of a higher order, the conception of this very subject cannot exist for a moment, without awakening, by the different tendency of the suggesting principle, groups of images which never before had existed in similar combination; and, instead of being an imitator, he becomes a great model for the imitation of others. The prevailing suggestions of the one, in his trains of thought, are according to the relation of analogy, which is almost infinite; the prevailing suggestions of the other are those of contiguity of the images themselves, which, by its very nature, admits of no novelty, and gives only transcripts of the past. To tame down original genius, therefore, to mere imitation, and to raise the imitator to some rank of

which it would be necessary only to reverse the entire process. The fancy of the one would then, in the possession of more contiguity, lose all that which would now distinguish it, and would present only such combinations of images, as had before occurred in a similar order in the works of former writers. The fancy of the other, on acquiring the leading principle of suggestions of analogy, would assume entirely new forms, of external objects, or of internal passion, would crowd upon his mind, by their analogy, of ideas and feelings previously existing, and the simple change of the direction of the suggesting principle would be sufficient to produce all those wonders which the poet of imagination owes to the intensity of inspiring genius.—

— *Wm. Linnæus*

The wandering language of the youthful bard,  
New to their sights and shades : who touch his ear  
And the whole world begins in his eye  
The world is mine, and before him lies  
The power, the power, the power of things !<sup>1</sup>

Even in all those thoughts that breathe, and words that burn,<sup>2</sup> and those boundless stores of imagery, which a great poet lavishes with magnificent profusion, there is probably not a single image which has not been an object of our own perception, and therefore capable of being again awakened in our own mind, in conformity with the primary laws of suggestion ; nay, there is perhaps not a single image which has not repeatedly been thus awakened in our mind. It is not, therefore, in consequence of any more copious store of images, that an original poet is enabled to group them in more beautiful variety,

<sup>1</sup> *Your, Orig.*

<sup>2</sup> *Attitude, Orig.*

<sup>3</sup> *Memories of Imagination, Book i. v. 25-30.*



since the forms which he combines are stored in the memory of all, and are common to him with the dullest versifier; nor is it from any superior tenacity of general memory, that they rise more readily to his imagination. They might rise to both minds, and they do rise to both minds; but they rise on different occasions, in consequence, merely, of the different directions of the suggesting principle. How many are there, who have seen an old oak, half leafless, amid the younger trees of the forest, and who are therefore capable of remembering it when they think of the forest itself or of events that happened there! But it is to the mind of Lucan that it rises, by analogy, on the conception of a veteran chief,—as in that exquisite simile, which, in contrasting the heroes of Pharsalia, he uses to illustrate the character of Pompey, and the veneration still paid to that ancient greatness of which little more was left than the remembrance of its glory:—

“ Stat magni nominis umbra,  
Qualis frugifero quereus sublimis in agro  
Exuvias veteres populi, sacrataque gestans  
Dona ducum: nec jam validis radicibus hærens  
Pondere fixa suo est; nudosque per æra ramos  
Effundens, trunco, non frondibus, efficit umbram  
At quamvis primo nutet casura sub Euro  
Tot circum sylvæ firmo se robore tollant  
Sola tamen colitur.”<sup>1</sup>

The inventions of poetic genius, then, are the suggestions of analogy: the prevailing suggestions of common minds are those of mere contiguity; and it is this difference of the occasions of suggestion, not of the images suggested, which forms the distinctive superiority of original genius. Any one who has had the pleasure of reading the beautiful simile, which I

<sup>1</sup> Pharsalia, Lib. i. v. 135-143.

have quoted to you from the *Pharsalia*, may, on the sight of a decaying oak, feel immediately the relation of analogy which this majestic trunk, still lifting as proudly to the storm, and spreading as widely its leafless arms, bears to the decay of human grandeur, more venerable, perhaps, in its very feebleness, than in all the magnificence of its power. The mind of every one, therefore, is capable of the suggestion of the one analogous object by the other, as much as the mind of Lucan. The only difference is, that, to produce this suggestion in a common mind, it was necessary, previously, to make the one conception successive, in point of time, to the other; to produce, in short, a proximity of the very images that could be obtained only by a perusal of the verses, in which the images are immediately proximate: while the suggestion in the mind of the original author, though perhaps not more clear and perfect than it was afterwards to be in the memory of many of those who have read the simile, and felt its justness and beauty, differed, notwithstanding, in this most important respect, that, in him, it did not require such previous contiguity to produce the suggestion, but arose by its mere analogy, in consequence of the greater tendency of the inventive mind to suggestions of this particular class.

Copious reading and a retentive memory may give to an individual, of very humble talent, a greater profusion of splendid images than existed in any one of the individual minds, on whose sublime conceptions he has dwelt till they have become, in one sense of the word, his own. There is scarcely an object which he perceives that may not now bring instantly before him the brightest imagery; but, for this suggestion, however instant and copious, previous co-existence, or succession of the images, was necessary; and it is his

memory, therefore, which we praise. If half the conceptions which are stored in his mind, and which rise in it now in its trains of thought by simple suggestion, as readily as they arose in like manner in accordance with some train of thought in the mind of their original authors, had but risen by the suggestion of analogy, as they now arise by the suggestion of former proximity, what we call memory, which is, in truth, only the same suggestion in different circumstances, would have been fancy or genius; and his country and age would have had another name to transmit to the reverence and the emulation of the ages that are to follow.

It is the same with inventive genius in the sciences and the severer arts; which does not depend on the mere knowledge of all the phenomena previously observed, or of all the applications of them that have been made to purposes of art, but chiefly on the peculiar tendency of the mind to suggest certain analogous ideas, in successions, different from those ordinary successions of grosser contiguity, which occur to common minds. He may, perhaps, be called a philosopher, who knows accurately what others know, and produces, with the same means which others employ, the same effects which they produce. But he alone has philosophic genius, to whose speculations analogous effects suggest analogous causes, and who contrives, practically, by the suggestions of analogy, to produce new effects, or to produce the same effects by new and simpler means.

The primary laws of association, then, it appears, as far as they operate in our intellectual exertions, are greatly modified by original constitutional diversities. They are not less modified by constitutional diversities of another kind. These are the diversities of what is



called temper, or disposition. It is thus we speak of one person of a gloomy, and of another of a cheerful disposition; and we avoid the one, and seek the company of the other, as if with perfect confidence that the trains of thought which rise by spontaneous suggestion to the minds of each will be different, and will be in accordance with that variety of character which we have supposed. To the cheerful, almost every object which they perceive is cheerful as themselves. In the very darkness of the storm, the cloud which hides the sunshine from their eye does not hide it from their heart; while, to the sullen, no sky is bright, and no scene is fair. There are future fogs, which, to their eyes, pollute and darken the purest airs of spring; and spring itself is known to them less as the season which follows and repairs the desolation of winter that is past, than as the season which announces its approaching return.

The next secondary law of suggestion to which I proceed, is one akin to the last which we have considered. The primary laws are modified, not by constitutional and permanent differences only, but by differences which occur in the same individual, according to the varying emotion of the hour. As there are persons whose general character is gloomy or cheerful, we have, in like manner, our peculiar days or moments in which we pass from one of these characters to the other, and in which our trains of thought are tinged with the corresponding varieties. A mere change of fortune is often sufficient to alter the whole cast of sentiment. Those who are in possession of public station, and power and affluence, are accustomed to represent affairs in a favourable light; the disappointed competitors for place, to represent them in the most gloomy light: and, though much of this difference

may, unquestionably, be ascribed to wilful mis-statement in both cases, much of it is, as unquestionably, referable to that difference of colouring in which objects appear to the successful and the unsuccessful.

“ Ask men’s opinions :—Scoto now shall tell  
How trade increases, and the world goes well.  
Strike off his pension, by the setting sun,  
And Britain, if not Europe, is undone.”<sup>1</sup>

The same remark may be applied to the different periods of life, to the happy thoughtlessness of youth, and to the cautious calculating sadness of old age. The comparative gaiety of our earlier years, is not merely a cause, but an effect also, of the tendency of the mind, at that period, to suggest images of hope and pleasure on almost every occasion.

If even a slight momentary feeling of joy or sorrow have the power of modifying our suggestions, in accordance with it, emotions of a stronger and lasting kind must influence the trains of thought still more : the meditations of every day rendering stronger the habitual connexions of such thoughts as accord with the peculiar frame of mind. It is in this way that every passion which has one fixed object, such as love, jealousy, revenge, derives nourishment from itself, suggesting images that give it, in return, new force and liveliness. We see, in everything, what we feel in ourselves ; and the thoughts which external things seem to suggest, are thus, in part at least, suggested by the permanent emotion within.

When Eloisa, in Pope’s celebrated Epistle, thinks of the invention of letters, the only uses which her train of thought suggests, are those which are analogous to the circumstances of her own passion.

<sup>1</sup> Pope’s Moral Essays, Ep. I. v. 158-161.

" Heaven first taught letters for some wretch's aid,  
Some banish'd lover, or some captive maid ;  
They live, they speak, they breathe what love inspires,  
Warm from the soul, and faithful to its fires ;  
The virgin's wish without her fears impart,  
Excuse the blush, and pour out all the heart ;  
Speed the soft intercourse from soul to soul,  
And waft a sigh from Indus to the Pole." <sup>1</sup>

The temporary diversities of state that give rise to varieties of suggestion are not mental only, but corporeal; and this difference of bodily state furnishes another secondary law, in modification of the primary. I need not refer to the extreme cases of intoxication or actual delirium,—to the copious flow of follies which a little wine, or a few grains of opium, may extract from the proudest reasoner. In circumstances less striking, how different are the trains of thought in health and in sickness, after a temperate meal and after a luxurious excess! It is not to the animal powers only that the burthen of digestion may become oppressive, but to the intellectual also; and often to the intellectual powers even more than to the animal. In that most delightful of all states, when the bodily frame has recovered from disease, and when, in the first walk beneath the open sunshine, amid the blossoms and balmy air of summer, there is a mixture of corporeal and mental enjoyment, in which it is not easy to discriminate what images of pleasure arise from every object, that, in other states of health, might have excited no thought or emotion whatever.

" See the wretch, that long has toss'd  
On the thorny bed of pain,  
At length repair his vigour lost,  
And breathe and walk again !

<sup>1</sup> V. 51-58.



The meanest flow'rot of the vale,  
The simplest note that swells the gale,  
The common sun, the air, the skies,  
To him are opening paradise."<sup>1</sup>

There is yet another principle which modifies the primary laws of suggestion with very powerful influence. This is the principle of habit. I do not speak of its influence in suggesting images which have been already frequently suggested in a certain order,—for it would then be simpler to reduce the habit itself to the mere power of association. I speak of cases in which the images suggested may have been of recent acquisition, but are suggested more readily in consequence of general tendencies produced by prior habits. When men of different professions observe the same circumstances, listen to the same story, or peruse the same work, their subsequent suggestions are far from being the same; and, could the future differences of the associate feelings that are to rise be foreseen by us at the time, we should probably be able to trace many of them to former professional peculiarities, which are thus always unfortunately apt to be more and more aggravated by the very suggestions to which they have themselves given rise. The most striking example, however, of the power of habit in modifying suggestion, is in the command which it gives to the orator, who has long been practised in extemporary elocution; a command, not of words merely, but of thoughts and judgments, which, at the very moment of their sudden inspiration, appear like the long-weighed calculations of deliberative reflection. The whole divisions of his subject start before him at once; image after image, as he proceeds, arises to illustrate it; and proper words, in

<sup>1</sup> Gray's Ode, On the Pleasures arising from Vicissitude, stanza vi.

proper places, are all the while embodying his sentiments, as if without the slightest effort of his own.

In addition, then, to the primary laws of suggestion, which are founded on the mere relations of the objects or feelings to each other, it appears that there is another set of laws, the operation of which is indispensable to account for the variety in the effects of the former. To these I have given the name of *secondary laws of suggestion*; and we have seen, accordingly, that the suggestions are various as the original feelings have been: 1st, Of longer or shorter continuance; 2dly, More or less lively; 3dly, More or less frequently present; 4thly, More or less recent; 5thly, More or less pure, if I may so express it, from the mixture of other feelings; 6thly, That they vary according to differences of original constitution; 7thly, According to differences of temporary emotion; 8thly, According to changes produced in the state of the body; and, 9thly, According to general tendencies produced by prior habits.

The first four laws, which relate rather to the momentary feelings themselves than to the particular frame of mind of the individual, have, it must be remembered, a double operation. When the two associate feelings have both together, or in immediate succession, been of long continuance, very lively, frequently renewed in the same order, and that recently, the tendency to suggest each other is most powerful. But the greater tendency, though then most remarkably exhibited, is not confined to cases in which these laws are applicable to both the associate feelings. It is much increased even when they apply only to that second in the succession. The sight of  
is altogether new to us, and which.

therefore, could not have formed a stronger connexion with one set of objects than with another, will more readily recall to us, by its resemblance or other relation, such objects as have been long familiar to us, than others which may have passed frequently before us, but with which we are little acquainted. The sailor sees everywhere some near or distant similarity to the parts of his own ship; and the phraseology, so rich in nautical metaphors, which he uses and applies, with most rhetorical exactness, even to objects perceived by him for the first time, is a proof that, for readiness of suggestion, it is not necessary that the secondary laws of suggestion should, in every particular case, have been applicable to both the suggesting and the suggested idea.

Even one of these secondary laws alone may be sufficient to change completely the suggestion which would otherwise have arisen from the operation of the primary laws; and it is not wonderful therefore, that when many of them, as they usually do, concur in one joint effect, the result in different individuals should be so various. Of the whole audience of a crowded theatre, who witness together the representation of the same piece, there are probably no two individuals who carry away the same images, though the resemblances, contiguities, contrasts, and in general what I have called the primary, in opposition to the secondary laws of suggestion, may have been the same to both. Some will perhaps think afterwards of the plot and general development of the drama; some, of the merits of the performers; some will remember little more than that they were in a great crowd, and were very happy; a gay and dissipated young man will perhaps think only of the charms of some fascinating actress; and a young beauty will as probably carry



away no remembrance so strong as that of the eyes which were most frequently fixed upon hers.

By the consideration of these secondary laws of suggestion, then, the difficulty which the consideration of the primary laws left unexplained is at once removed. We see now how one suggestion takes place rather than another, when, by the operation of the mere primary laws, many suggestions might arise equally; the influence of the secondary laws modifying this general tendency, and modifying it, of course, variously, as themselves are various.

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#### LECTURE XXXVIII.

*The Degree of Liveliness of the Suggesting Feelings influences greatly that of the Feelings Suggested.*

MY last Lecture, Gentlemen, was employed in an inquiry which very naturally arises from the consideration of the various relations according to which suggestion may take place; why, if the same object, as either perceived or imagined by us, is capable, by its almost innumerable relations, of suggesting the conception of various other objects, it suggests at any particular time, one of these rather than another? To say that certain objects suggest certain other objects which are similar to them, opposite to them in quality, or formerly proximate in place or time, is to say nothing in explanation of this difficulty, but only to state the very difficulty itself; since it is to state various relations, according to which various conceptions may indifferently arise. It is evident, therefore, that whatever may be the number of these primary laws of suggestion, or general circumstances of relation, according

to which the parts of our trains of thought may suggest each other, there must be other circumstances which modify and direct the operation of the primary laws. To these modifying circumstances I gave the name of *secondary laws of suggestion*; the classification of which—though not less interesting or important than the classification of the general circumstances which constitute the primary laws—has been altogether neglected even by those philosophers who have endeavoured to arrange the primary relations.

The chief part of my last Lecture was employed, accordingly, in inquiring into the general circumstances which constitute the secondary laws of suggestion; those circumstances by which it happens, that one suggestion takes place rather than another, when, according to the mere primary laws, either suggestion might equally occur.

To repeat, then, briefly, that enumeration which was the result of our inquiry, the occasional suggestions that flow from the primary laws on which our trains of thought depend, are various, as the original feelings have been, 1st, Of longer or shorter continuance; 2dly, More or less lively; 3dly, Of more or less frequent occurrence; 4thly, More or less recent; 5thly, More or less pure from the occasional and varying mixture of other feelings; 6thly, They vary according to differences of original constitution; 7thly, According to differences of temporary emotion; 8thly According to changes produced in the state of the body; and, 9thly, According to general tendencies produced by prior habits. Many of these differences, it is evident, may concur; but even a single difference in any one of these respects may be sufficient to account for the particular varying suggestion of the moment.

The next inquiry to which I would direct your attention, is to the difference of liveliness of the feeling which forms a part of a train of thought, according as that which suggested it may have been itself more or less lively.

The conception of an object may, it is evident, be suggested in two ways: by the perception of some other object really existing without; or by some other conception, previously existing in a train of internal thought. But though it may be suggested in either way, it is by no means indifferent, with respect to it, in which of the two ways the suggestion has taken place.

"The influence of perceptible objects," says Mr Stewart, "in reviving former thoughts and former feelings, is more particularly remarkable. After time has, in some degree, reconciled us to the death of a friend, how wonderfully are we affected the first time we enter the house where he lived! Everything we see,—the apartment where he studied,—the chair upon which he sat,—recall to us the happiness we have enjoyed together; and we should feel it a sort of violation of that respect we owe to his memory, to engage in any light or indifferent discourse when such objects are before us. In the case, too, of those remarkable scenes, which interest the curiosity from the memorable persons or transactions which we have been accustomed to connect with them in the course of our studies, the fancy is more awakened by the actual perception of the scene itself, than by the mere conception or imagination of it. Hence the pleasure we enjoy in visiting classical ground; in beholding the retreats which inspired the genius of our favourite authors, or the fields which have been dignified by



exertions of heroic virtue. How feeble are the emotions produced by the liveliest conception of modern Italy, to what the poet felt, when, amidst the ruins of Rome,

“He drew th’ inspiring breath of ancient arts,  
 ——And trod the sacred walks,  
 Where, at each step, imagination burns!”

Thomson.

“The well-known effect of a particular tune on Swiss regiments when at a distance from home, furnishes a very striking illustration of the peculiar power of a perception, or of an impression on the senses, to awaken associated thoughts and feelings; and numberless facts of a similar nature must have occurred to every person of moderate sensibility, in the course of his own experience.

“‘Whilst we were at dinner,’ says Captain King, ‘in this miserable hut, on the banks of the river Awatska,—the guests of a people with whose existence we had before been scarce acquainted, and at the extremity of the habitable globe,—a solitary half-worn pewter spoon, whose shape was familiar to us, attracted our attention; and, on examination, we found it stamped on the back with the word, *London*. I cannot pass over this circumstance in silence, out of gratitude for the many pleasant thoughts, the anxious hopes, and tender remembrances, it excited in us. Those who have experienced the effects that long absence, and extreme distance, from their native country, produce on the mind, will readily conceive the pleasure such a trifling incident can give.’”<sup>1</sup>

Of the truth of these delightful influences, who is there that can doubt? Distant as we are from those

<sup>1</sup> Philosophy of the Human Mind, Chap. V. Part i, sect 4.

lands, which, in the studies of our boyhood, endeared and consecrated by so many remembrances, were to us almost like the very country of our birth, it is scarcely possible to think of ancient Rome or Greece, without mingling, with an interest more than passive, in the very ages of their glory. Some name or exploit instantly occurs to our mind, which, even in the faintness of our conception, is sufficient to transport us, for some few moments, from the scene of duller things around. But when we tread on the soil itself,—when, as Cicero says, speaking of Athens, “Quocunque ingredimur, in aliquam historiam vestigium ponimus,”—all which history has made dear to us is renewed to our very eyes. There are visionary forms around us, which make the land on which we tread, not the country that is, but the country that has been. We see again the very groves of Academus ;

“ And Plato’s self

Seems half-emerging from his olive bowers,  
To gather round him all the Athenian Sons  
Of Wisdom.”

“Tanta vis admonitionis est in locis,” says Cicero, in a passage of his work *De Finibus*, in which he describes the peculiar vividness of our conceptions, on the actual view of scenes ennobled by the residence of those whom we have been accustomed to revere,—“Naturâne nobis datum dicam, an errore quodam, ut cum ea loca videamus, in quibus memoriâ dignos viros acceperimus multùm esse versatos, magis moveamur, quam siquando eorum ipsorum aut facta audiamus aut scriptum aliquod legamus? Velut ego nunc moveor. Venit enim mihi Platonis in mentem, quem acceperimus primum hic disputare solitum ; cujus etiam illi hortuli propinqui, non memoriam solùm mihi

afferunt, sed ipsum videntur in conspectû meo hic ponere. Hic Speusippus,—hic Xenocrates,—hic ejus auditor Polemo, cujus ipsa illa sessio fuit quam videamus.”<sup>1</sup>

After these observations of Cicero, at a time when Greece was to him, in a great measure, that land of former greatness, which his own country now is to us, it may be interesting to you to compare with the impression, thus described by him, the impression as described by one of our own contemporaries, after an interval of so many ages. I shall quote to you, therefore, a few passages of a Letter, written from Athens, by the very ingenious French poet, the Abbé de Lille, who visited Greece in company with his friend M. de Choiseuil, the ambassador from France to Constantinople.

“At length,” says he, “we were forced to lie to, by a contrary wind, if I can call that a contrary wind, which gave an opportunity of beholding Athens.

“I shall not endeavour to express to you the pleasure which I felt, on setting my foot on that celebrated land. I could have wept for joy. I saw, at last, what I had only read before. I recognised everything which I had known from my infancy; all was at once familiar to me and new. But what was my emotion on seeing the first monument of that city, which is destined to be for ever interesting?

“I gazed and gazed again, as if my eyes could never be weary, on those magnificent columns of the finest Parian marble, interesting by their own beauty,—by that of the temples which they adorned,—by the glorious ages which they recall to memory, and by their eternal influence, as the standard of good and bad taste, in every nation and age that for ever will

<sup>1</sup> Lib. V. c. 1.



be striving to imitate their noble proportions. I passed from one to the other,—I touched them,—I measured them, with insatiable avidity. In vain were they falling to ruins: I could not hinder myself from looking on them as imperishable; I believed that I was making the fortune of my name, in engraving it on their marble. But, too soon, I perceived with grief my illusion. These precious remains have more than one enemy; and, of their enemies, Time is far from being the most terrible. The barbarous ignorance of the Turks destroys, sometimes in a single day, what whole ages had spared. I saw lying at the gate of the commandant one of those beautiful columns which I mentioned to you. An ornament of the Temple of Jupiter was about to adorn his Haram. The temple of Minerva, the finest work of antiquity, the magnificence of which was so ruinous to Pericles, is enclosed, as it were, in a citadel, constructed partly at its expense. We mounted to it by steps, composed of its precious fragments, treading under foot the sculptures of Phidias and Praxiteles. I felt as if to tread on them was to be an accomplice in the profanation, and I avoided them as carefully as I could, shrinking back almost involuntarily wherever I set my foot.

“There are still to be seen seventeen beautiful columns, the remains of one hundred and ten, which supported what is said to have been the Temple of Adrian. Before these is a threshing-floor, paved with its magnificent fragments. Between two of these pillars, a Greek hermit had made his dwelling a few years back, to live and die there; more proud of the homage of the populace who fed him, than Themistocles of the acclamations of Greece. These detached columns excite a sort of pity, even by their magnifi-

cence. I asked who it was who had mutilated them, for it was easy to see that it was not the effect of time. I was told that they had been broken down for making mortar. I wept with very rage.

"Everywhere through the city is there the same cause for grief; not a threshold of a door, not a step of a stair, which is not a fragment of ancient marble, torn by force from some monument,—the whole one mixture of meanness and magnificence,—a wretched rafter of fir resting, perhaps, on columns that had supported the Temple of a god.

"With what a mixture of pain and pleasure did I see everywhere, some portion of an inscription, perhaps the epitaph of a great man,—an arm,—a foot that might have belonged to a Venus or a Minerva, fixed among common stones, in a common wall! I perceived in a court a marble fountain; I entered to take a nearer view; it had been formerly a magnificent tomb, adorned with the finest sculptures; I threw myself prostrate before it, and kissed the tomb. In the heedlessness of my adoration I overturned the pitcher of a child who was laughing at my strange behaviour. From laughter he passed to tears and cries; I had nothing on me to appease him with; and Heaven knows when he would have been comforted, if my Turks, good souls, had not threatened to beat him.

"Shall I tell you all the folly of the emotions which I felt? At the moment when I entered Athens, almost palpitating, the least relics of it appeared sacred. You know the story of the savage who had never seen any pebbles. I did like him: I filled first the pockets of my coat, then the pockets of my waistcoat, with bits of sculptured marble; and then, like the savage, but with how much more regret! I threw them all away."

I must not extend any further, however, a quotation which is already too long. Some of the actions described, the prostrations, the tears, the kisses, may appear a little beyond the sageness of British enthusiasm; but the picture is not the less striking for that air of national emotion which runs through it,—an emotion which harmonizes so well with the quick feelings of that people, by the remembrance of whom it was kindled,—and which makes the visiter seem almost a native of the very soil which he describes.

Even to the sober temperance of our enthusiasm, however, such a spectacle as that of Athens would be a little dangerous. We may think of it calmly, we may read of it calmly. But he must be cold indeed, who could set his foot on the very soil, or see but a single column of all those ruins of which he had calmly read and thought, without some feelings that might have appeared extravagant, even to himself, if described as the feelings of any other being.

In such circumstances, the Genius of ancient Greece himself might almost seem present to a poetic mind, like that which, warmed by the mere images of her departed glory, could so beautifully invoke his descent:—

“Genius of Ancient Greece! whose faithful steps,  
Well pleased, I follow through the sacred paths  
Of Nature and of Science; nurse divine  
Of all heroic deeds and fair desires!  
Descend, propitious, to my favour'd eye  
Such in thy mien, thy warm exalted air,  
As when the Persian tyrant, foiled and stung  
With shame and desperation, hid his face  
Among the herd of satraps and of kings,  
And at the lightning of thy lifted spear,  
Crouch'd like a slave! Bring all thy martial spoils,  
Thy palms, thy laurels, thy triumphal songs,  
Thy smiling band of arts, thy godlike sires  
Of civil wisdom, thy heroic youth



Warm from the schools of glory. Guide my way  
 Through fair Lyceum's walk, the green retreats  
 Of Academus, and the thymy vale,  
 Where oft enchanted with Socratic sounds,  
 Ilissus pure devolved his tuneful stream  
 In gentler murmurs. From the blooming store  
 Of these auspicious fields, may I, unblamed,  
 Transplant some living blossoms, to adorn  
 My native clime; while, far above the mead  
 Of Fancy's toil<sup>1</sup> aspiring, I unlock  
 The springs of ancient Wisdom! while I join  
 Thy name thrice honour'd! with the immortal praise  
 Of Nature; while to my compatriot youth  
 I point the high example of thy sons,  
 And tune to Attic themes the British lyre."<sup>2</sup>

It is this peculiar tendency of objects of perception, to throw a brighter colouring on the ideas they suggest, that gives the chief value to the monuments of national gratitude. The conquest of the Roman generals must have been known to all the citizens of Rome; but it was in the triumphal procession to the Capitol that they must have felt most proudly the grandeur of the Republic, and the honour of the individual victor; and must have caught that emulation, which was to lead them afterwards through fields of equal danger, to ascend the same glorious car. Themistocles, we are told, could not sleep for thinking of the trophies of another distinguished chief; and it was thus, perhaps, that the victory of Marathon, in the combat of a later period, again delivered Greece. The trophy, the obelisk, the triumphal arch, would, indeed, be of little

<sup>1</sup> Fancy's plume, Orig.

<sup>2</sup> Pleasures of Imagination, v. 567-604, with the exclusion of v. 571-579; and the substitution, from the second form of the poem, (B. I. v. 707-8,) of "hid his face," &c., to "King's," instead of

"gnashed his teeth

To see thee rend the pageants of his throne."—v. 583-4.

abstract, if they were only to recall to us the names and dates of the actions they commemorate: but while they receive past honours they are, in such the passages and have their passages of honours to come. In Spain an oration was every year pronounced on the tomb of Scipio. Is it possible to suppose that if such a scene had with such an object before them, the orator and the assembled nation who listened to him felt in deeper emotion than they would have done if the same language had been addressed from any other place unconnected with so sacred a remembrance? "To abstract the mind," says Dr Johnson, is a passage which has become almost trite from frequent quotation and which is strongly marked with all the peculiarities of his style—"to abstract the mind from all local emotion would be impossible if it were endeavour'd and would be foolish if it were possible. Whoever withdraws us from the power of our senses,—whoever makes the past the distant, or the future, predominate over the present,—advances to us the dignity of thinking beings. Far from me and from my friends," he continues, "be such frigid philosophy, as may confer us indifferent and unmoved, over any ground which has been dignified by wisdom, bravery, or virtue. That man is little to be envied, whose patriotism would not gain force upon the plains of Marathon, or whose piety would not grow warmer among the ruins of Iona."<sup>1</sup>

When Antony, in his funeral eulogium of Cæsar, uncovered the body before the people, he knew well what powerful persuasion the wounds which he pointed out would give to his oratory. It has been well remarked, "that never had funeral eloquence so powerful an impression, for it prepared the slavery of twenty

<sup>1</sup> *Journal of a Tour, &c.*; Works, v. ix. p. 319. Edit. Edin. 1806.

nations. The dead body of Lucretia had freed Rome from the fetters of its tyrants; the dead body of Cæsar fastened on it again its chains."

"This influence of perceptible objects in awakening associated thoughts and associated feelings," says Mr Stewart, "seems to arise, in a great measure, from their permanent operation as exciting or suggesting causes. When a train of thought takes its rise from any idea or conception, the first idea soon disappears, and a series of others succeeds, which are gradually less and less related to that with which the train commenced; but, in the case of perception, the exciting cause remains steadily before us; and all the thoughts and feelings which have any relation to it crowd into the mind in rapid succession; strengthening each other's effects, and all conspiring in the same general impression."<sup>1</sup>

This explanation of a very striking phenomenon is simple and beautiful; and it may be remarked, in confirmation of it, that it is not every object of perception which renders the trains of ideas that succeed it more vivid, but only such objects as are, in themselves, interesting; and, therefore, lead the mind to dwell on them, giving that time, therefore, which Mr Stewart supposes to be necessary for gathering and bringing forward the crowd of associate ideas which conspire in heightening the particular emotion. The sight of any thing indifferent to us may suggest various conceptions, without any peculiar liveliness of the conceptions suggested. In the instance of the pewter spoon, so pathetically related by Captain King, —an instance, I may remark by the way, which shows how much it is in the power of circumstances to give interest and even a species of dignity to the

<sup>1</sup> Philosophy of the Human Mind, Chap. V. Part i. sect. 1.



most vulgar object—there can be no doubt that, often before the discovery of it, innumerable objects, familiar to all the crew, must have brought their distant home to their remembrance. But such a spoon, found in a country so distant, must have been an object of astonishment; and the importance which the surprise at the discovery gave to it, must have caused them to dwell on it, till it awakened all those tender remembrances, which an object more familiar, and therefore less interesting, would have failed to excite.

Just, however, as I conceive Mr Stewart's explanation to be, to the whole extent to which the circumstances assigned by him can operate, I am inclined to think that there is another circumstance which concurs very forcibly in the effect, and is probably the chief source of the vivid emotion. That there is something more than the mere permanence of the object of perception concerned in giving additional liveliness to the ideas it suggests, is, I think, evident from this, that, when the external object is very interesting, it produces a considerable effect, before the permanence can have operated so far as to have collected and condensed, if I may so express it, any very considerable number of ideas. After the first impulse of emotion, indeed, the longer the object continues present, so as to produce a greater number of associate thoughts and feelings,—all, as Mr Stewart says, “strengthening each other's effects, and all conspiring in the same general impression,”—the more lively of course, or, at least, the more permanent must the emotion become. Yet still the first burst of feeling, almost at the very moment of the perception, remains unexplained. To a woman of lively sensibility, who, after many years of happy

wedlock, has been deprived by death of the father of her children, and who has learned, at length, that sort of tender resignation which time alone inspires, so as to think of his memory not indeed without sorrow, but with a sort of tranquil sadness,—to such a person, the discovery of a letter, a book, a drawing, or any other trifling and unexpected memorial, is sufficient to fill the eyes and the heart with instant and overwhelming emotion. It is probable that Captain King had often thought, for a longer time together, of Britain, and had thus gathered in his imagination more circumstances connected with his home, than at the moment when he began to be powerfully affected by the sight of the spoon. Beside the mere permanence, therefore, of objects of perception, there must be some other circumstance of influence which precedes the effect of the permanence, and probably continues to augment it.

This additional circumstance appears to me to be the following: When any object of perception is so interesting as to lead us to pause in considering it, the associate feelings which it suggests are not consecutive merely to the perception; but, as the perception is continued for a length of time, they co-exist and are mingled with it, so as to form with it one complex feeling. With the perception, however, is of course combined the belief of the actual external reality of its object; and this feeling of reality being a part of that complex whole, of which the co-existing associate ideas are also constituent parts, mingles with them all, so as, when the imaginary part readily harmonizes with the real, to diffuse over the whole, which is felt as if one scene or group, a sort of faint temporary impression of reality. In such a process, the illusive impression of reality, which the perception communi-

cates to the co-existing associate ideas, must of course be greater in proportion as the perception is itself more lively; and in proportion, too, as by the interest which it excites, it leads the mind to dwell on it longer so as to produce that heightened effect of emotion, so justly ascribed by Mr Stewart to the groups of kindred ideas and feelings. Yet, independently of the influence of these groups, as a number of conceptions, the mere illusion produced by the mingling reality of the perception, with which they blend and harmonize, may, of itself, in very interesting cases, be sufficient to account for that sudden burst of overpowering emotion, which, otherwise, it would be so difficult to explain.

It is not to be supposed, indeed, that the illusion remains very long. On the contrary, there is reason to believe that almost every moment the conviction of the absolute unreality of what is merely conceived recurs, and the whole which seemed to exist before us vanishes again and is lost; but almost every moment, likewise, the illusion itself recurs, by the mere co-existence of the perception of the real object with the unreal, but harmonizing conceptions. That the illusion is frequently broken, however, and the feeling of the presence of a number of beloved objects renewed and lost in rapid succession, is far from unfavourable to the violence of the emotion which it produces; since innumerable facts show that the mind is never so readily moved to extreme emotion as when it fluctuates between two opposite feelings. In the sudden alternations of joy and grief, hope and fear, confiding love and jealousy, the agitation of each seems not to lessen the violence of the other, but to communicate to it, in addition, no small portion of its own violence. Hence it happens, that eyes which can retain their tears, with firm and inflexible patience, under the pres-



sure of any lasting affliction, dissolve instantly into the very softness of sorrow, not on any increase of misery, but on the sudden impulse of some unexpected joy. The agitation of an interesting allusion, therefore, rapidly conceived and rapidly dispelled, is the very state which, from our knowledge of the analogous phenomena of mind, might be supposed the most likely to produce an overflow of any tender emotion.

I have already stated the general mode in which I conceive perception to give peculiar vividness to the associate feelings which it suggests.

The general doctrine, however, will perhaps be best illustrated by the analysis of what takes place in a particular instance. When the Swiss is at a distance from his country, some accidental image, in a train of thought, may lead him in fancy to his native mountains; but, in this case, the ideas of his imagination are not attached to anything external and permanent, and are, therefore, comparatively faint. When, however, he actually hears, in all the vividness of external sense, the song of his home, the conception of his home is immediately excited, and continues to co-exist with the impression produced by the well-known air. That air, however, is not a faint imagination, but a reality. It is not the remembrance of a perception, but is, in truth, the very same perception which once formed a part of his complicated sensations when the song was warbled along his valley, and the valley and the song were together present to his eye and ear. That actual song, and not the perception indeed, but the conception of the valley, are now again present to his mind: and it is not wonderful, therefore, that the reality of the song, as actually co-existing and blending with the conception of the scene, in the same manner as they had often been mingled when both were real, should

communicate to it, in the momentary illusion, a portion of its own vividness.

There is a very pleasing example of the influence which we are at present considering, related by the late Dr Rush of Philadelphia, in the volume which he published of his Introductory Lectures. "During the time I passed at a country-school in Cecil County, in Maryland," says this ingenious and amiable medical philosopher, "I often went, on a holiday, with my schoolmates, to see an eagle's nest, upon the summit of a dead tree in the neighbourhood of the school, during the time of the incubation of that bird. The daughter of the farmer in whose field this tree stood, and with whom I became acquainted, married, and settled in this city about forty years ago. In our occasional interviews, we now and then spoke of the innocent haunts and rural pleasures of our youth, and, among other things, of the eagle's nest in her father's field. A few years ago I was called to visit this woman when she was in the lowest stage of a typhus fever. Upon entering her room, I caught her eye, and, with a cheerful tone of voice, said only, *The eagle's nest*. She seized my hand, without being able to speak, and discovered strong emotions of pleasure in her countenance, probably from a sudden association of all her early domestic connexions and enjoyments with the words I had uttered. From that time she began to recover. She is now living, and seldom fails, when we meet, to salute me with the echo of the 'eagle's nest.'"<sup>1</sup>

In this very striking case, according to the theory which I have stated to you, it was not, I conceive, the mere remembrance of the nest, and of her early

<sup>1</sup> Lect. XI. On the Utility of a Knowledge of the Faculties of the Mind to a Physician, p. 268-269.

enjoyments, that produced the excitement of lively feeling so delightful at the moment, and so salutary in its seeming consequences. This mere remembrance might have been produced by the same words, uttered in any tone, by any speaker. But, if the suggestion had arisen from the voice of a stranger, how very different, we have every reason to suppose, would the effect have been, to the mind in which the images were awakened! It was the presence of him, who had been her companion, in the years, and scenes, and pleasure recalled, that made the remembrance, for the time, something more than mere imagination,—his felt reality as a part of the former whole, all present to her mind,—a reality, the illusive effects of which were probably aided in a high degree by the cheerful tone that harmonized with the images excited, when a sadder or more serious tone would perhaps have dissolved or lessened the illusion. The friend of her youth was present, while some of the most interesting events of her youth, of which his presence and cheerful voice formed a part, were suddenly brought before her; and it is not wonderful, therefore, that, in the sudden happiness of the remembrance, the whole, for the moment, should have seemed present with him.

“A house, a farm, a fruit-tree, and a classical book,” says the same writer, “have often carried the mind back to the innocent and delightful scenes of a country school. A peculiar colour in dress, a tune, and a line of poetry, have often revived the raptures of courtship; while the fife and the drum have renewed, in a veteran soldier, the transports of his youthful victories and glory. An old native African obtained permission from his master, some years ago, to go from home, in order to see a lion that was conducted



as a show through the State of New Jersey. The moment he saw him, in spite of the torpid habits of mind and body contracted by fifty years' slavery, he was transported with joy, which he vented by jumping, dancing, and loud acclamations. He had been familiar with that animal, when a boy, in his native country; and the sight of him suddenly poured upon his mind the recollection of all his enjoyments, from liberty and domestic endearments, in his own country, in the early part of his life."<sup>1</sup>

In these cases, in like manner, I conceive the chief influence of the perception to have consisted in the diffusion of its own felt reality, over the associate feelings with which it continued to co-exist and blend. It is not the mere remembrance, therefore, of the military music, to which he marched, in days of long past fatigue, or peril and glory, that produces in the veteran the vivid emotion. It must be the very sound itself. The drum, or the trumpet, must be heard by him, so as to restore to him the past, as if present again with all the lively feelings of other years; while every other moment, breaking the charm, and convincing him of the unreality of the scenes and persons that are only imagined, gives a melancholy tenderness to the pleasure, as if the objects of it were alternately recovered and lost. The tumultuous emotions of the old negro did, indeed, arise, as Dr Rush says, from the sudden pouring on his mind of early and delightful remembrances, but not, as he supposes, from this alone; since these very remembrances had probably recurred innumerable times when the emotion was far weaker. It was because the lion, with the sight of which the African had been familiar in his youth, and which, after so long and so sad an in-

<sup>1</sup> Lect. ult. On the Pleasures of the Mind, p. 448-449.

terval, brought before him again, by suggestion, the woods or the wastes of his native land,—was a living thing truly existing before him,—a part of that complex group of images which formed the conception of the land of his birth, of his parental home, of his early friendships, of his freedom; and, as itself real, shedding in some measure a part of its own reality on the other images that co-existed with it. It seems probable, even that the strong emotion of terror, or of adventurous daring, which, in his own land, had been excited by the presence of that mighty animal,—and which the mere sight of the formidable object could scarcely fail to awaken again, in some slight degree, by the influence of mere association,—would tend very powerfully to increase the influence of the mere reality, by the additional liveliness which it would give to the harmonizing parts of the remembered scene.

It may perhaps be thought, that, in supposing this diffusion of the feeling of external reality,—from an object perceived, to the suggested conceptions that co-exist with it,—I assume more, in the present case, than any analogous phenomena justify. To those, however, who are acquainted with the theory of vision,—as explained to you in former Lectures,—it must, on the contrary, appear that the explanation takes for granted nothing more than the possibility of that which must be allowed to take place, during almost every moment of our waking hours, in by far the most important class of our perceptions. All which we see by the eye, even if superficial extension be truly seen by it, is a mere expanse of light, various perhaps in tint, more or less brilliant, and more or less extended. It is by the suggestion and combination of the associate ideas of another sense, that we seem to perceive longitudinal distance, and

all the figures which depend on it. Yet the associate ideas, which are, of course, only imaginary, and the real sensations are so blended in our mind, that we ascribe external reality equally to both parts of the complex whole. We do not see, and remember, or infer; but the sight, and the mere remembrance, or inference, form, as it were, one common and equal sensation, which we term *vision*. The diffusion, of which I spoke, or, in other words, the communication of the feeling of reality from an object of perception to conceptions suggested by it, and continuing to co-exist with the direct perception, here unquestionably takes place,—and takes place at every moment of vision. When I suppose, therefore, the Swiss, on hearing the familiar song of his native cottage, to spread over the image of his cottage that reality which is actually felt in the song, I suppose only an operation of precisely the same kind with that which took place as often as the cottage itself was a real object of his sight.

It is by a similar operation that the superstitious, in twilight, incorporate their fears with the objects which they dimly perceive, till the whole, thus compounded, assumes the appearance of external reality. The moanings of the wind are the voice of a spirit, to which their apprehension readily invents a language; and the white sheet, or other shadowy outline, gives a sort of permanent and terrifying body to the spectres of their own mind. It is imagination, indeed, still; but it is imagination combined with perception, and readily harmonizing with it; and the spectral forms and voices seem truly to exist, because there are forms which are truly seen, and sounds which are truly heard.



## LECTURE XXXIX.

*The Degree of Liveliness of the Suggesting Feelings affects that of the Feelings Suggested.—On the virtual Co-existence of Feelings.*

GENTLEMEN, my last Lecture was occupied with the consideration of a very important difference in our suggestions, according as they arise from the perception of objects really existing without, or from those mere conceptions of objects which form a part of our trains of fancy. I quoted to you some ingenious remarks of Mr Stewart on this subject, in which he endeavours to account for the difference by the longer duration of the perception, which allows more thoughts and feelings, in unison with it, to mingle together, and thus to heighten, by combination, the emotion which each, separately, would have produced.

Of the very powerful influence which the greater permanency of our perceptions, than of our mere conceptions, must have, by giving room for the co-existence of various relative feelings, there can be no doubt. But as the emotion is, in many cases, almost instantaneous,—so rapid at least, that if the difference of time were all which, in ordinary circumstances, distinguished the effect of the perception from that of the conception, the mere remembrance of the object which affects us, (being, though fugitive, at least as lasting as the momentary interval between the primary perception and the burst of feeling,) might equally have produced the overwhelming tenderness of sorrow; it seemed to me necessary to have recourse to some other circumstance, in addition to that supposed by Mr Stewart.

This circumstance, which I conceived to be neces-

sary for explaining fully the phenomenon, I represented to you to be the felt reality of the object perceived, as co-existing and blending with the conception that harmonizes with it, and thus giving to the whole complex group the temporary illusion of reality. That this is only one of many analogous phenomena,—and, indeed, that nothing more is assumed, in the explanation, than must be allowed truly to take place at almost every moment of our waking hours, I proved to you by various examples, particularly by the example of vision, in which there is a constant extension to our mere conceptions of that external reality, which exists only in a part of the complex whole which we seem to perceive: the form which we give to the bodies seen by us, and which we believe to be as much an object of our sight as their colour, being the suggestion of our memory only, and as imaginary, in relation to our percipient mind, as any other conceptions which any other perceptions excite. If, indeed, we admit, as we cannot but admit, that we do not see, visually, any space larger than the mere plane of the nervous expansion in the eye—or rather, as I endeavoured to show you in a former Lecture, that we do not see directly and originally any space whatever; and that, on either of these suppositions, the forms and distances which we perceive, derive all their felt present reality from the reality of the existing sensation of colour which blends with them, it cannot surely seem a very bold assumption to suppose that what is thus indisputably true of one set of sensations, when co-existing with one set of conceptions, may be true of the same set of sensations, when co-existing with another set of conceptions at least as vivid as the former.

I may remark, as an analogous illustration of this

tendency of the mind to combine the reality of perception with the harmonizing conceptions which it suggests, and with which it continues to blend, that an effect in some degree similar,—different, indeed, as might be supposed, in force, but analogous in kind,—seems to take place, in the combination of any very vivid conception with other mere conceptions, when these two harmonize and unite readily as a complex whole. There is, as it were, a diffusion of the vividness of the one over the faintness of the other. The more vivid,—that is to say, the more nearly approaching to the strength of reality,—the one conception may be, the more fully is it diffused in union with the other, and the more difficult, consequently, does it become to regard this other as separate from it; so difficult, indeed, in many cases, as almost to resist the influence of the most undoubting speculative belief. In the case of our emotions, the very nature of which is to throw a peculiar vividness on the conceptions that harmonize with them, there can be no doubt as to this diffusion of lively feeling,—by the influence of which, in impassioned reverie, our conceptions that would otherwise be comparatively faint, sometimes appear to us more truly real than the objects really existing without. It is not wonderful, therefore, that the effect which our emotions, as mere lively feelings harmonizing with certain conceptions, produce in vivifying those conceptions with which they harmonize, should be produced, in some degree, by our conceptions; when these, too, as feelings, are comparatively lively, in diffusing their own liveliness over the fainter conceptions that may harmoniously mingle with them. When, for example, by the classical studies of our early years, our minds have become almost as well acquainted with the war-



riors of Greece and Troy as with the warriors of our own time, and the gates and towers of Ilium seem, as it were, to be present to our very eyes, if we strive to think of the Troad in its present state of desolation, it is scarcely possible for us to conceive it as it is. Our livelier conception of the past diffuses itself in some measure over our conception of the present scene; and, notwithstanding all the information which we have received, and the full credit which we give to the veracity of the travellers from whose report we receive it, we still, when we think of the scene, imagine on it at least some vestiges of past grandeur existing, with a sort of shadowy reality. If we were on the very spot, our eye would still look in vain for these, as if the monuments that are present to our thought were necessarily to be as lasting as that remembrance of them which is never to fade; and there can be no question that, even now, when so many ages have intervened, and when our knowledge of the state of the country admits not of the slightest doubt, we should feel, from moment to moment, some portion of the expectation, and, in no slight degree, the disappointment also, which Cæsar must have felt in that visit to the ancient seat of his fabled ancestors of which the Poet of Pharsalia has given so picturesque a narrative:—

“ Circuit exustæ nomen memorabile Trojæ,  
Magnaue Phœbei quærit vestigia muri.  
Jam silvæ steriles et putres robore trunci  
Assaraci pressere domos, et templa Deorum  
Jam lassa radice tenent:—ac tota teguntur  
Pergama dumetis; etiam periæ ruinæ.  
Aspicit Hesionæ scopulos, silvasque latentis  
Anchisæ thalamos;—quo judex sederit antro;  
Unde puer raptus cælo;—quo vertice Nais  
Luserit Oenone;—nullum est sine nomine saxum.

Inscius in sicco serpentem pulvere rivum  
 Transierat, qui Xanthus erat :—securus in alto  
 Gramine ponebat gressus :—Phryx incola manes  
 Hectoreos calcare vetat. Discussa jacebant  
 Saxa, nec ullius faciem servantia sacri :—  
 Herceas, monstrator ait, non respicis aras ? ” <sup>1</sup>

The difficulty which we feel in this case, in imagining the absolute desolation of the Troad, arises from the greater vividness of our conception of ancient Troy, than of our conception of the scene which the same spot now presents,—a vividness which almost incessantly mingles the more lively with the fainter conception, in spite of our effort to separate them. Our calm belief attends the latter of these conceptions; but there is an illusion of reality attached to the greater vividness of the former, which is almost every moment mingling with the other; though it is, every other moment, overcome by the opposite belief, which is too strong to be wholly subdued. This constant mingling and separation of the two, forms that feeling of perplexity and effort of which we are conscious, in attempting to consider, for any length of time, the scene as it truly is, and as we truly believe it to be.

To lessen this feeling of effort, as if by a more ready transition, nothing is so effectual as the conception of that state of decay which is intermediate between grandeur and absolute desolation.

“ Aspice murorum moles, præruptaque saxa,  
 Obrutaque horrenti vasta theatra situ !  
 Hæc sunt Roma. Viden, velut ipsa cadavera tantæ  
 Nobis adhuc spirent imperiosa minas.”

“ See the wide waste of all-devouring years !  
 How Rome her own sad sepulchre appears !

<sup>1</sup> Pharsalia, Lib. ix. v. 964-979.

With nodding arches, broken temples spread !  
The very tombs now vanish like their dead.  
Perhaps, by its own ruins saved from flame,  
Some buried marble half-preserved a name.”<sup>1</sup>



Rome, thus in ruins, is easily conceived by us ; for the ruins, in their magnificent decay, are themselves a vivid picture of that grandeur of which we have been accustomed to think. But Rome, if it had no monument of art remaining, and had only its seven naked hills to mark its ancient site, scarcely could be conceived by us for a few moments in succession ; its former grandeur rising on our remembrance, without any intermediate conception into which it might softly fade ; and mingling, therefore, its own entire reality, as vividly conceived by us, with the fainter conception of that bare soil on which all its miracles of splendour arose.

This influence of our mere conceptions, however, even when comparatively vivid, though illustrating by analogy the influence of perception, is still, as might be supposed, far inferior to the influence of that of actual perception, which I consider as diffusing its felt reality over the associate conceptions that blend and harmonize with it.

With respect to the more important theory of this influence, I may remark, that even though the perception of the kindred harmonizing object were not to operate positively, by blending the feeling of its own reality with the conceptions that mingle with it, its negative influence would still be very powerful. It would at least tend, by occupying our perception with a harmonizing object, to diminish the impressions produced by other objects ; impressions which, not harmonizing with the particular associate ideas, would at once break the illusion which gives substance and

<sup>1</sup> Pope's Epistle to Addison, on his Medals, v. 1-4, and 15, 16.



colouring to their shadowy forms. It is, indeed, this inconsistency of our perceptions with our ideas of suggestion, which, in our waking hours, in almost every instance, prevents that belief of the reality of the objects of our imagination, which otherwise we should be disposed to entertain. Though no other effect, therefore, were allowed to be produced by a perception which interests us, and which itself harmonizes with the trains of thought suggested by it, its negative influence would still be very powerful. It would be, in a slight degree, like that of sleep, which excludes, or nearly excludes, all sensation, and allows the trains of ideas which pass through the mind,—the hills, and lakes, perhaps, and pastimes and friends of our youth,—to assume, for the time, an impression of actual reality, as if present with us once more.

In many of these cases, in which the perception of new, or long-lost objects, gives warmth and animation to our trains of thought, there is another circumstance which must have considerable influence. An object that is daily before our eyes becomes associated with innumerable ideas, which have no peculiar harmony or agreement with each other; and though it may suggest these variously, at different times, it is still apt to mingle some of them together, especially if it occupy the attention for any length of time. A memorial which we have received from a friend, for example, must, in a very short time, if it remain in our possession, be associated with many events and feelings that have no relation to our friend. These, as more recent, may become of readier suggestion, in conformity with that secondary law which I stated to you; and, at least, by mingling in the suggestion many irrelative remembrances, cannot fail to weaken, more and more, the interest which the primary and

more tender image would otherwise afford. But an object newly discovered, such as any unexpected relict of a long-lost friend, presents the instant image of him to our mind, and presents it unmixed with other conceptions, that could not have co-existed with it, without weakening its particular impression.

There is yet another circumstance which I conceive must be taken into account, in every such case of unexpected discovery : this is the influence of the feeling of astonishment itself. In common circumstances, for which we are prepared, we readily, and almost unconsciously, exercise a self-command, which keeps down any violent emotion. But, when we are struck with new and unexpected circumstances, this self-command is often completely suspended ; and we yield to the first emotion that arises, however inconsistent it may be with the general character of our mind. The sudden appearance of a foe in ambush spreads terror to the breasts of those who would have marched undaunted in the open field, in the face of any danger that could have been opposed to them. It is probable, therefore, that when, in the instance quoted to you yesterday, the crew of Captain King's ship melted into tears on discovering, in a remote and barbarous country, a pewter spoon stamped with the word "London," it was partly under the influence of the sudden astonishment which they must have felt ; an astonishment which, if it had arisen from circumstances of a different kind, might perhaps have excited a panic of terror, as it then excited what, in relation to the rugged sternness of a ship's company, might almost be considered as a sort of panic of tender emotion.

I have already instanced, as illustrative of the diffusion of the felt reality of a perception over the co-existing imagery of our internal thought, the terrors

of the superstitious, to whom the wild moanings of the wind, and the shadowy forms seen in the obscurity of twilight, realize, for the moment, the voices and the spectral shapes which their fancy has readily mingled with them. I might show, in like manner, various other instances, since the whole field of mind seems to me to present examples of this species of illusive combination supposed by me, in which the felt reality of something truly existing, is diffused over images of unexisting things. There is scarcely one of our moral affections which it may not, as I conceive, augment or variously modify, as, in an after-part of the course, I shall have frequent opportunities of pointing out to you. In the case of jealousy, for example,—to hint merely at present what is afterwards to be more fully developed,—what undue importance does the slightest fact, that harmonizes with the suspicions previously entertained, give to those very suspicions in the minds of persons, whose better judgment, if free from the influence of that gloomy passion, could not have failed to discover the futility of the very circumstances to which they attach so much importance; the felt truth of the single fact observed communicating, as I conceive, for the time, to the whole co-existing and blending and harmonizing images of suspicion, that reality which it alone possessed. Who is there, in like manner, who must not frequently have observed the influence of a single slight success, in vivifying to the sanguine their most extravagant hopes? the reality of this one happy fact giving instantly a sort of obscure reality even to those extravagant conceptions which are all considered, together with the realized wish, as parts of one great whole. Slight as these hints are, they may serve, at least for the present, to give you some notion of the



extensive applicability of a principle, which is, in truth, as wide as the wide variety of feelings that may relate to an imaginary object.

These observations on the influence which objects of perception have, by their permanence, as well as by their reality, in giving additional liveliness to our associate feelings, lead me to remark a property of the suggesting principle, which, however much neglected, seems to me, in the various applications that may be made of it, of the greatest importance, since, without it, it is impossible to explain many of the most striking phenomena of thought. We are so much accustomed to talk of the successions of our ideas, of the trains of our ideas, of the current of our thought; and to use so many other phrases of mere succession, to the exclusion of all notions of co-existence, in speaking of the modifications of the principle of suggestion, that, by the habitual use of these terms, we are led to think of our ideas as consecutive only, and to suppose that, because there is truly a certain series of states of the mind in regular progression, the state of mind at one moment must be so different from the state of mind of the moment preceding, that one idea must always fade as a new one arises. That the sequence may sometimes be thus exclusive in the very moment of all that preceded the particular suggestion I do not deny, though there are many circumstances which lead me to believe that, if this ever occur, it is at least far from being the general case.

Thus, to take an instance in some degree similar to those which we have before considered,—when, at a distance from home, and after an interval of years, we listen to any simple song with which the remembrance of a friend of our youth is connected, how many circumstances not merely rise again, but rush

upon us together? The friend himself; the scene where we last sat and listened to him; the domestic circle that listened with us; a thousand circumstances of that particular period, which had perhaps escaped us, are again present to our mind: and with all these is mingled the actual perception of the song itself. As the parts of the song succeed each other, they call up occasionally some new circumstance of the past; but we do not, on that account, lose the group which were before assembled. The new circumstance is only added to them, and the song still continues to blend with the whole the pleasure of its own melody, or rather, mingling with them in mutual diffusion, at once gives and borrows delight.

If this virtual co-existence, in the sense now explained, which, I trust, you will always understand as the sense intended by me, be true of the case in which perception mingles with suggestion, it is true, though in a less remarkable degree, of our conceptions alone. Had the same ballad, as in the former case, not been actually sung, but merely suggested by some accidental circumstance, though our emotion would have been less lively, and though fewer objects and events connected with the scene might have arisen, it would still probably have suggested the friend, the place, the time, and many other circumstances, not in separate and exclusive succession, like the moving figures of a continued train, but multiplying and mingling as they arose. Of the innumerable objects of external sense which pass before our eyes in the course of a day, how many are there which excite only a momentary sensation, forgotten almost as soon as it is felt? while on many others we dwell with the liveliest interest. In like manner, there are many of our ideas of suggestion which are as indifferent to us as the

thousand objects that flit before our eyes. They exist, therefore, but for a moment, or little more than a moment, and serve only for the suggestion of other ideas, some of which, perhaps, may be equally short-lived, while others, more lively and interesting, pause longer in the mind; and, though they suggest ideas connected with themselves, continue with them, and survive, perhaps, the very conceptions which they suggest. I look at a volume on my table; it recalls to me the friend from whom I received it,—the remembrance of him suggests to me the conception of his family, of an evening which I spent with them, and of various subjects of our conversation. Yet the conception of my friend may continue, mingled, indeed, with various conceptions, as they rise successively, but still co-existing with them; and is, perhaps, the very part of the complex group, that, after a long train of thought, during which it had been constantly present, suggests at last some new conception, that introduces a different train of its own, of which the conception of my friend no longer forms a part.

But for this continuance and co-existence, of which I speak, I cannot but think that the regular prosecution of any design would be absolutely impossible. When we sit down to study a particular subject, we must have a certain conception, though probably a dim and shadowy one, of the subject itself. To study it, however, is not to have that conception alone, but to have successively various other conceptions, its relations to which we endeavour to trace. The conception of our particular subject, therefore, must, in the very first stage of our progress, suggest some other conception. But this second conception, if it alone were present, having various relations of its own, as well as its relation to the subject which suggested it,



would probably excite a third conception, which had no reference to the original subject,—and this third, a fourth,—and thus a whole series, all equally unrelated to the subject which we wished to study. It would hence seem impossible to think of the same subject even for a single minute. Yet we know that the fact is very different, and that we often occupy whole hours in this manner, without any remarkable deviation from our original design. Innumerable conceptions, indeed, arise during this time, but all are more or less intimately related to the subject, by the continued conception of which they have every appearance of being suggested; and, if it be allowed that the conception of a particular subject both suggests trains of conception, and continues to exist together with the conceptions which it has suggested, everything for which I contend, in the present case, is implied in the admission.

What would be that selection of images of which poets speak, if their fancy suggested only a fleeting series of consecutive images? To select, implies not the succession, but the co-existence of objects of choice; and there can be no discrimination and preference of parts of a train of thought, if each separate part have wholly ceased to exist, when another has arisen. The conception of beauty calls up some immediate image to the poetic mind, and kindred images after images arise, not fading, however, at each suggestion, but spreading out all their mingled loveliness to that eye which is to choose and reject. With what exquisite truth and beauty is this process described by one to whom the process was familiar, and who knew well to draw from it its happiest results!

“Thus at length  
Endow'd with all that nature can bestow,

The child of Fancy oft in silence bends  
 O'er these mix'd treasures of his pregnant breast,  
 With conscious pride. From them he oft resolves  
 To frame he knows not what excelling things,  
 And win he knows not what sublime reward  
 Of praise and wonder. By degrees the mind  
 Feels her young nerves dilate :—the plastic powers  
 Labour for action :—blind emotions heave  
 His bosom ;—and with loveliest frenzy caught,  
 From earth to heaven he rolls his daring eye,  
 From heaven to earth. Anon ten thousand shapes,  
 Like spectres trooping to the wizard's call,  
 Flit swift before him. From the womb of earth,  
 From ocean's bed they come :—the eternal heavens  
 Disclose their splendours, and the dark abyss  
 Pours out her births unknown. With fixed gaze  
 He marks the rising phantoms :—now compares  
 Their different forms, now blends them, now divides,  
 Enlarges and extenuates by turns,  
 Opposes, ranges in fantastic bands,  
 And infinitely varies. Hither now,  
 Now thither, fluctuates his inconstant aim,  
 With endless choice perplex'd. At length his plan  
 Begins to open. Lucid order dawns ;  
 And as from Chaos old the jarring seeds  
 Of nature, at the voice divine repair'd  
 Each to its place, till rosy earth unveil'd  
 Her fragrant bosom, and the joyful sun  
 Sprung up the blue serene ; by swift degrees  
 Thus disentangled, his entire design  
 Emerges. Colours mingle, features join,  
 And lines converge :—the fainter parts retire.  
 The fairer, eminent in light, advance,  
 And every image on its neighbour smiles." <sup>1</sup>

There is, then, it appears, a continued co-existence of some of our associate feelings with the feelings which they suggest. And it is well for us that nature has made this arrangement. I do not speak at present of its importance to our intellectual powers, as essential to all continuity of design, and to every wide

<sup>1</sup> Pleasures of Imagination, Book III. v. 373-408.

comparison of the relations of things,—for this I have already endeavoured to demonstrate to you. I speak of the infinite accession which it affords to our happiness and affections. By this, indeed, we acquire the power of fixing, in a great degree, our too fugitive enjoyments, and concentrating them in the objects which we love. When the mother caresses her infant, the delight which she feels is not lost in the moment in which it appears to fade. It still lives in the innocent and smiling form that inspired it, and is suggested again, when the idea of that smile passes across her mind. An infinity of other pleasures are, in the progress of life, associated in like manner; and with these additional associations, the feeling which her child excites becomes proportionately more complex. It is not the same unvarying image, exciting the remembrance, first of one pleasure, and then of another, for in that case the whole delight would not, at any one moment, be greater than if the two feelings alone co-existed; but a thousand past feelings are present together, and, continuing with the new images which themselves awake, produce one mingled result of tenderness, which it would be impossible distinctly to analyze. Why is it that the idea of our home, and of our country, has such powerful dominion over us? that the native of the most barren soil, when placed amid fields of plenty, and beneath a sunshine of eternal spring, should still sigh for the rocks, and the wastes, and the storms which he had left?

“ But where to find that happiest spot below,  
Who can direct, when all pretend to know?  
The shuddering tenant of the frigid zone  
Boldly proclaims that happiest spot his own;  
Extols the treasures of his stormy seas,  
And his long night of revelry and ease.



The naked negro, panting at the Line,  
Boasts of his golden sands, and palmy wine,  
Basks in the glare, or stems the tepid wave,  
And thanks his gods for all the good they gave."<sup>1</sup>

In vain may we labour to think, with Varro, as a consolation in banishment, that, "wherever we go, we must still have the same system of nature around us;" or, with Marcus Brutus, that, whatever else may be torn from the exile, "he is still permitted at least to carry with him his own virtues." In vain may we peruse the arguments with which Seneca quaintly attempts to show that there can be no such thing as banishment, since the country of a wise man is, wherever there is good; and the existence of what is good for him, depends, not on the accident of place, but on his own will. "*Exulabis. Non patria mihi interdicitur, sed locus. In quacunque terram venio, in meam venio. Nulla terra exilium est. Altera patria est. Patria est, ubicunque bene est; illud autem, per quod bene est, in homine, non in loco est. In ipsius potestate est, quæ sit illi fortuna. Si sapiens est, peregrinatur; si stultus, exulat.*" All this reminds us of the Stoic, who, tortured with bodily pain, and expressing the common signs of agony, still maintained, at intervals, with systematic obstinacy, that this was no affliction:—

"Pain's not an ill, he utters—with a groan."

And if it was truly during the period of his dismal residence in Corsica, that the philosopher made this vain attempt to prove the impossibility of banishment, it is probable, that, while he was thus laboriously endeavouring to demonstrate that his country was still with him on the barren rocks to which he was

<sup>1</sup> Goldsmith's Poems; Traveller, v. 63-72.

condemned, his own Corduba or Rome was rising on his memory with painful tenderness; and that the very arguments, with which he strove to comfort himself, would be read by him, not with a groan, perhaps, but at least with an inward sigh. His poetry was, unquestionably, far more true to nature than his philosophy,—if he was indeed the author of those pathetic poems on his exile, in some verses of which he speaks of the banished, as of those on whom the rites of burial, that separate them from the world, had been already performed, and prays the earth of Corsica to lie light on the ashes of the living—

“Parco relegatis, hoc est jam parco sepultis.”<sup>1</sup>

Vivorum cineri sit tua terra levis.”<sup>2</sup>

In the instance of Seneca, indeed, whose relegation was not the effect of crime on his part, but of the artifices of an adulterous empress, the remembrances attached to the land from which he was separated, may be supposed to have been more powerful, because they were not accompanied with feelings of remorse and shame, that might have rendered the very thought of return painful to the criminal. But, in the bosom of the criminal himself, there is still some lingering affection, which these dreadful feelings are not able wholly to subdue; and he returns, at the risk of life itself, to the very land which had thrown him from her bosom, and marked him with infamy. There is, perhaps, no human being, however torpid in vice, and lost to social regard, who can return, after a long absence, to the spot of his birth, and look on it with indifference, and to whom the name of his country presents no other image than that of the place in which he dwells.

<sup>1</sup> *Al. solutis.*

<sup>2</sup> *Senecæ Epig. ad Corsicam, v. 7, 8.*

What, then, is this irresistible power which the mere sound of home can exercise over our mind? It surely does not arise from the suggestion of a number of conceptions, or other feelings, in separate succession; for no single part of this succession could of itself be sufficiently powerful. It is because home does not suggest merely a multitude of feelings, but has itself become the name of an actual multitude; and though, in proportion as we dwell on it longer, it suggests more and more additional images, still these are only added to the group which formerly existed, and increase the general effect; which could not be the case, if the suggestion of a single new idea extinguished all those which had preceded it. It is probable even, that there is no one interesting object, which has been of frequent occurrence, that is precisely the same as it arises to our mind at different times, but that it is always more or less complex, being combined with conceptions or other feelings that co-existed with it when present to the mind on former occasions. The very circumstance of its being interesting, and therefore lively, will render it less fugitive whenever it occurs in a train of thought, and will thus give it an opportunity of combining itself with more ideas of the train, which, though accidentally mingled with it at the time, may still, from the laws of suggestion, form with it, afterwards, one complex and inseparable whole.

What extensive applications may be made of this doctrine of the continuance of the suggesting feeling, in co-existence with the feelings which it suggests, will be seen, when we proceed to the consideration of various intellectual phenomena, and still more, of our emotions in general, particularly of those which regard our taste and our moral affections. It is this conden-



sation of thoughts and feelings, indeed, on which, in a great measure, depends that intellectual and moral progress, of which it is the noblest excellence of our being, even in this life, to be susceptible, and which may be regarded as a pledge of that far nobler progression which is to be our splendid destiny in the unceasing ages that await us, when the richest acquisitions of the sublimest genius, to which we have looked almost with the homage of adoration, on this mortal scene, may seem to us like the very rudiments of infant thought. Even then, however, the truths which we have been capable of attaining here, may still, by that condensation and diffusion of which I have spoken, form an element of the transcendent knowledge which is to comprehend all the relations of all the worlds in infinity, as we are now capable of tracing the relations of the few planets that circle our sun; and, by a similar diffusion, those generous affections, which it has been our delight to cultivate in our social communion on earth, may not only prepare us for a purer and more glorious communion, but be themselves constituent elements of that ever-increasing happiness, which, still prolonging, and still augmenting the joys of virtue, is to reward, through immortality, the sufferings, and the toils, and the struggles of its brief mortal career.

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#### LECTURE XL.

*Reasons for preferring the term Suggestion, to the phrase  
Association of Ideas.*

THE latter part of my Lecture of yesterday, Gentlemen, was employed in illustrating a distinction which seems to me of great consequence in its applications

to the whole theory of the intellectual phenomena,—the distinction of the trains of our thought from other trains of which we are accustomed to speak,—in this most important circumstance, that, in our mental sequences, the one feeling which precedes and induces another feeling, does not, necessarily, on that account, give place to it; but may continue in that virtual sense of combination, as applied to the phenomena of the mind, of which I have often spoken, to co-exist with the new feeling which it excites, outlasting it, perhaps, and many other feelings to which, during its permanence, it may have given rise. I pointed out to you how important this circumstance in our mental constitution is to us, in various ways: to our intellectual acquirements,—since, without it, there could be no continued meditation, but only a hurrying confusion of image after image, in wilder irregularity than in the wildest of our dreams; and to our virtue and happiness,—since, by allowing the co-existence and condensation of various feelings in one complex emotion, it furnishes the chief source of the delight of those moral affections which it is at once our happiness to feel, and our virtue to obey.

After these remarks on a distinction which it appears to me of essential importance to make, I proceed to the consideration of a question of still more importance in the theory of our trains of thought, at least in the light in which these have been commonly regarded by philosophers. Its importance in this respect, is, however, I must confess, its principle attraction; and it will require from you a little more attention and patience than the greater number of the discussions which have recently engaged us.

Before entering on this particular part of my Course,

which treats of the phenomena commonly classed together under the general term *association of ideas*, I remarked the error of this seeming limitation to our ideas, of a tendency which is common to them with all our other feelings; and at the same time mentioned, that there were other reasons, afterwards to be stated, which led me to prefer to this phrase a term more strictly indicative of the simple fact of the rise of certain states or affections of the mind, after certain other states or affections of mind; unwilling as I was to alter, without some urgent motives, a phrase which the universal language of philosophers, and even the popular language on this most popular part of intellectual philosophy, might be considered almost as having fully and finally established. The term which I preferred, as most strictly expressive of the simple fact of the mere antecedence of one feeling, and sequence of another feeling, was *suggestion*; and instead, therefore, of inquiring into the laws of association, I inquired into the general circumstance on which suggestion depends. In the course of our discussions, indeed, I have continued sometimes to avail myself, as you must have remarked, of the more familiar phrase association. But I have done this only in cases in which the use of it appeared without danger, or at least when any misconception that might arise from it, was sufficiently obviated, by the use of the corresponding term *suggestion*, as explaining and restricting its meaning. The examination of the question on which we are about to enter will show the reason which chiefly led me to the preference of the one of these terms to the other; and though, as I have already said, the discussion is not of a kind that admits of pleasing illustration, I trust that you are sufficiently impressed with the paramount importance in science of the useful to the



agreeable, or rather, that the useful is itself agreeable to you, by the mere circumstance of its utility.

That, when two objects have been perceived by us in immediate succession, the presence of the one will often suggest the other,—though this second object, or a similar external cause, be not present,—is that great fact of association or suggestion, which we must admit, whatever opinion we may form with respect to its nature, or whatever name we may give to it. But when the former of these two objects first suggests the conception of the latter, in the absence of this latter, and at a considerable interval of time after the first co-existence of the two perceptions, or their first proximity to each other, we may inquire whether the suggestion be the consequence of a law or general tendency of the mind, first operating at that moment of the suggestion itself;—or the consequence of another earlier law of mind, distinct from that of the mere perception itself, but operating at the time when both objects were originally perceived together, whether during the original perception of the two objects, at the period long preceding the first suggestion of one by the other, there was, beside the simple perception of each, some other intellectual process or operation, by which a union might be supposed to be formed of the two conceptions in all their future recurrences,—or, simply, whether such be not the natural constitution of the mind, that one affection of it succeeds another affection of it, and that the successions occur in a certain order; in short, whether the laws that regulate the recurrence be laws of association, in the strictest sense of that word, as expressive of some former connecting process, or merely laws of suggestion, as expressive of the simple tendency of the mind, in the very moment in which it is affected in a certain

manner, to exist immediately afterwards in a certain different state.

At first sight, the question which this distinction implies may seem to be a question only as to the use of a term, and to involve little actual difference; or, if the actual difference which it involves be admitted, it may seem a question which it is not in our power to solve; since, on either supposition, whether the suggestions arise from some earlier process of mysterious association, at the time of the first co-existence or proximity of the perceptions, or from some equally mysterious limitation of the subsequent spontaneous suggestions to a certain series, the suggestions themselves must be the same, and must follow in the same order.

It will appear, however, on a more attentive consideration, that the distinction, far from being verbal merely, is, in truth, a most important one, and has had a powerful, and, as I conceive, a most injurious influence on all the arrangements which have been made of them by philosophers,—and that the discovery of the period of the primary influence of the laws that regulate suggestion is not beyond the reach of observation,—on that view of the phenomena which supposes them to result from tendencies to suggestion of various kinds, such as the resemblances, contrasts, and contiguities, of which writers on this branch of intellectual physiology are accustomed to speak.

It is, indeed, chiefly with a view to this belief, that I think it necessary to enter into the discussion, since the assertors of a connecting process of association, as that on which suggestion in every case depends, have been also strenuous assertors of various forms of association itself; and have, in consequence of the perplexities in which this double belief has involved them,

been led into those cumbrous arrangements of the intellectual phenomena, from the error of which I am desirous of freeing you.

I have already, in treating of the primary laws of suggestion, stated to you my belief, that, by a more refined analysis than writers on this subject have been accustomed to make, the varieties of suggestion might all be found to be reducible to one general tendency of succession, according to the mere order of former proximity or co-existence; and I cannot but think that this reduction has appeared more difficult than it truly is, in consequence of the unfortunate phrase *association of ideas*,—which, seeming to confine the tendency of suggestion to our ideas alone, made it impossible, in many cases, to discover the necessary proximity—when the proximity had never really existed with respect to the ideas in the train, but was to be found only in some emotion, or internal sentiment or judgment, that was common to the two.

In treating of the suggestions of resemblance, accordingly, I ventured to give you an example of this very nice analysis, in which similar objects were supposed to be suggested by similar objects, in consequence merely of some part which was the same in both, and which excited, by the influence of former proximity, the other parts, which co-existed with it, as one great whole.

In cases of the more shadowy resemblance of analogy, in like manner,—as in those comparisons of objects with objects which constitute the similes and metaphors of poetry,—though there may never have been in the mind any proximity of the very images compared, there may have been a proximity of each to an emotion of some sort, which, as common to both, might render each capable indirectly of suggesting the other.



When, for example, the whiteness of untrodden snow brings to our mind the innocence of an unpolluted heart, or a fine morning of spring the cheerful freshness of youth, they may do this only by the influence of a common emotion excited by them. The tendency to suggestions of analogy, which, in distinction from the tendency to suggestion of the grosser contiguities of objects themselves, or their direct images, I stated to be the great characteristic or constituent of inventive genius, may thus be only another form, or, at least, a very natural result, of that susceptibility of vivid emotion, which, even by those who have not formed the same theory of genius, is usually conceived to be characteristic of the poetic temperament. The livelier the emotion may be, the longer must it continue to co-exist with objects, and the quicker and surer, therefore, must it be to recall such objects as have at any time co-existed with it. There may, therefore, when there is no proximate association of ideas, be a proximity as real in the mixed suggestion of ideas and emotions.

In contrast, I might perhaps say, in like manner, that suggestion takes place, not indeed by the union of causation with resemblance, as Mr Hume strangely supposed, but by resemblance alone, and therefore, according to the view now given, by proximity,—a resemblance, however, not in the contrasted object itself, but in some emotion, or other secondary feeling, to which that contrasted object gives rise. All objects that are strikingly contrasted must agree, at least, in this one respect, that they are very strange of their kind. When we see any one, for example, with a single feature of his face of very unusual dimensions, as a very large nose, the feeling that rises in our mind almost immediately after gazing on it, is the reflection

how very singular a nose this is. This reflection is itself a certain state of the mind, which, if produced in any way, may afterwards excite, as in the ordinary cases of suggestion, the accompanying conception of the object which first produced it. When we happen afterwards to see an individual with a nose as remarkably short, the very same reflection will as instantly arise; and this sameness of the proximate feeling may be sufficient, by mere proximity, to induce, on the perception of one of the objects, the conception of the contrasted object,—that is contrasted in form, indeed, but still similar in the sentiment which it excites. In the case of every other relation, too, it may be said, in like manner, that the relative suggests its correlative; because, whatever be the circumstance of agreement in which the relation consists, this circumstance is common to both, and may form a connecting link of mere proximity, as in any other case of resemblance, when the common circumstance is suggested by either of the two.

That some such fine and minute proximity as this, may be detected in every case of suggestion, seems to me in the highest degree probable at least. But still, as the process by which I evolve it is a very subtle one, and there is, therefore, from its subtility, a greater possibility of its being fallacious;—as the suggestions of contrast and analogy seem, in the retrospects of our consciousness, equally immediate as those of proximity, itself,—and as, whether the feelings have been at any time truly proximate or not, the great mystery of the suggestion itself remains the same,—I thought it safer, in our illustration of them, to consider them as distinct tribes.

In my own view of suggestion, however, in which I regard all our associate feelings as admitting of a

possible reduction to a fine species of proximity, I do not consider any influence distinct from that of the mere existence of the original feelings themselves, in their state of proximity, to be indicated by our consciousness, or at all necessary to the subsequent suggestions; but, as the assertors of this necessity, with whom I contend, are all assertors of distinct species of suggestions, my argument with them will proceed on their own principles, and take for granted, that there are suggestions of resemblance, contrast, &c., which are not specifically the same as those of mere proximity. You will remember, then, that my argument is a relative argument, and view it always in the relation which it is meant to bear to the opinions of others rather than my own.

Proceeding, accordingly, on the general belief of distinct tribes of suggestions, in our inquiry into the evidence which the phenomena afford of a previous influence of association, let us take for an example, then, a case of contrast, in which the perception or conception of one object suggests immediately the conception of some other object, of which the qualities are so dissimilar, as to be absolutely opposite to those qualities which we are perceiving or conceiving at the moment.

The first sight of a person of stature remarkably beyond the common size, is sufficient, in many cases, to bring instantly before us, in conception, the form of some one, with whom we may happen to be acquainted, of stature as remarkably low. In consequence of what law of mind does this suggestion take place?

If we say merely that such is the nature of the mind that it is not affected by external objects alone, but that the state or affection of mind which we call



a conception or idea of an object, in whatever manner excited, may give immediate rise to other ideas, of which no external cause at the moment exists before us; that one idea, however, does not suggest indifferently any other idea, but only such as have some peculiar relation to itself; that there is a considerable variety of such relations, resemblance, contiguity, and others; and that of this variety of relations, according to which ideas may spontaneously suggest each other, contrast is one;—we deliver an accurate statement of the facts, and of the whole facts; and whatever goes beyond this, to some earlier mysterious process of union,—even though it could, by a skilful effort of ingenuity, be reconciled with the phenomena,—must still be a supposition only; for, if we trust the evidence of our consciousness, which affords the only evidence, we have no knowledge of any intermediate process that can have the name of association, but simply of the original perceptions, and the subsequent suggestion. Of this the slightest retrospect will convince any one. It is to our consciousness, then, at the time of the perception and the time of the suggestion that we must look. Now, all of which we are conscious at the time of perception might be precisely the same, though there were no memory whatever after perception ceases, or though, in remembrance, there were no such order of suggestions afterwards, as is supposed to justify the supposition of some pre-existing association, but, on the contrary, the utmost irregularity and confusion. Our consciousness during perception is thus far from indicating any process of association; and all of which we are conscious at the time of the suggestion itself, is the mere succession of one feeling to another, not certainly of any prior process on which this suggestion has depended. The

laws of suggestion, then, as opposed to what may be called association,—or, in other words, the circumstances which seem to regulate the spontaneous successions of our ideas, without reference to any former intellectual process, except the simple primary perceptions from which all our corresponding conceptions are derived,—form a legitimate theory, being a perfect generalization of the known facts, without a single circumstance assumed. To these laws, which require no prior union of that which suggests with that which is suggested, the particular case which we are considering is easily referable, being one of the very cases comprehended in the generalization. The sight of a gigantic stranger brings before us the image of our diminutive friend; because such is the nature of the mind, that,—in whatever manner the primary ideas may have been induced, and though there may never have been any co-existence or immediate succession of them before,—opposites, by the very circumstance of their opposition, suggest opposites. It is as much a law of mind that one perception or conception shall introduce, as it were spontaneously, the conception of some similar object,—or of one so dissimilar as to be contrasted with it,—or of one which formerly succeeded it,—or of one in some other way related to it,—and that it shall introduce such relative conceptions alone; as it is a law of mind that the influence of light on the retina, and thus indirectly on the sensorium, shall be followed by the sensation of vision and not of sound; and, however mysterious and inexplicable the one process may be, it is not more inexplicable than the other. It is as little necessary to the suggestion that there should be any prior union or association of ideas, as, to vision, that there should be any mysterious connexion of the

organ with light, at some period prior to that in which light itself first acted on the organ, and the visual sensation was its consequence. As soon as the presence of the rays of light at the retina has produced a certain affection of the sensorium, in that very moment the mind begins to exist in the state which constitutes the sensation of colour; as soon as a certain perception or conception has arisen, the mind begins to exist in the state which constitutes what is said to be some associate conception. Any prior connexion or association is as little necessary in the one of these cases as in the other. All that is prior, is not any process connecting light with the organ, or the conception of a giant with the conception of a dwarf, but only certain original susceptibilities of the mind by which it is formed, to have in the one case some one of the sensations of vision when light is at the retina,—in the other case to have, in certain circumstances, the conception of a dwarf as immediately consecutive to that of a giant.

In tracing, accordingly, each separate suggestion in the trains of our thought to the nature of the mind, its original energies or susceptibilities, as operating at the time of the suggestion, and to the laws which then regulate its affections, we find a place for the instance of contrast which we are considering, and see how, when one external object alone is present, a giant may suggest a dwarf, or a dwarf a giant. The laws of mind, like the laws of matter, are only the brief expression of certain general circumstances, in which many phenomena agree; and the laws of suggestion,—if we do not look back to any association or connexion previous to the suggestion itself,—do fairly comprehend the particular case considered by us.



Let us next consider whether this suggestion can be accounted for on the other supposition, which ascribes our trains of ideas to associations previous to the suggestion itself,—to laws of association, in short, in the sense in which that phrase is distinguishable from laws of suggestion.

To treat the question with all due candour, I shall make no objection to the term *association*, as if it implied too gross an analogy to corporeal things; for, unfortunately, it has this fault only in common with almost every current phrase in the Philosophy of Mind. If we are obliged to speak of mental analysis, of complex affections, of groups of images, and trains of thought, we may well be allowed to speak of the images of these trains as associated, if no objection but that of its seeming materialism can be urged against the phrase. Nor could any objection be fairly made to the association of ideas, as implying a sort of connexion which it is impossible to explain, if there truly were any consciousness of more than the original perceptions at the time when the association is supposed; but, when there is no consciousness of anything more, it may be allowed us, at least, to require some proof of the connecting process that is supposed, more than the mere fact of a subsequent suggestion that may be explained without it.

Even though we were not to require any proof of this kind, however—making all the admissions which in candour we are bound to make, and more than candour requires of us—to the hypothesis which ventures, in the case of suggestion, to go beyond the tendency of the mind at the moment of the suggestion itself, and to ascribe it to some prior mental state or process, of which we are unconscious, but which the hypothesis supposes to be necessary for the subsequent



tion, because it excludes every association of the two ideas prior to the suggestion itself. In suggestions of objects formerly contiguous, it might have been supposed by those who, in explaining the phenomena of our consciousness, trust more to a gratuitous hypothesis than to the evidence of consciousness itself, that as the perceptions originally co-existed, or were immediately successive, some mysterious connexion of those states of mind might be formed at the time of this co-existence, or immediate proximity, that might deserve to be expressed by the particular name of association, in consequence of which connexion, the one state afterwards was to induce the other. But when there has been no such co-existence or succession, as in the case of the first suggestions of contrast, what association can there have been on which the suggestions may be supposed to have depended? The association, in such a case, is manifestly nothing more than the momentary influence of the tendency of the suggestion itself; and to say that the suggestion depends on association, is the same thing as it would be to say, that suggestion depends upon suggestion. It depends, indeed, on the relation of the suggesting object to the object suggested,—as similar, opposite, contiguous in time or place, or in some other way related,—the tendency to suggest relative feelings after relative feelings being one of the original susceptibilities of the mind, essential to its very nature,—but it depends on nothing more; and an object, therefore, the very moment of our first perception of it, may suggest some object that is related to it, in one or other of these ways, as readily as after we have perceived it a thousand times; though it surely would be a very strange use of a very common term to speak of any previous association in



this case, and to say that objects were associated before they had existence, as they must have been, if this first suggestion had depended on any prior union or process of any kind.

I need not repeat, that my argument, in this discussion, proceeds on that universal opinion of philosophers, in which our suggestions are considered as of various classes, and not on that more subtle analysis, by which I have endeavoured to show, that there may possibly be only a finer species of proximity in all; though, in this case, too, it is equally evident that the process of association, if it were gratuitously supposed as something different from the original feelings themselves, would be at once equally hypothetical and equally ineffacious for explaining the subsequent suggestions. That an object seen for the first time does suggest many relative conceptions, no one surely will deny; and this single consideration, I cannot but think,—if the distinction universally made, of various principles of suggestion, be admitted,—should, of itself, have led to juster notions of our trains of thought. It appears to me, indeed, as I have said on that view of our suggestions, to be absolutely decisive of the question; since, whatever might be supposed in other cases, in this case, at least, there cannot have been any previous connexion of that which suggests with that which is suggested. It proves that the tendency of the mind, in suggestion, is not to exist successively in states which have been previously associated, but simply to exist in successive states, which have to each other certain relations, permanent or accidental,—those relations which, in former Lectures, were considered by us as reducible to certain primary laws of suggestion.

I am aware that this long argument on a single

point, and that, in itself, not a very interesting one, must have appeared to you rather a heavy tax upon your patience. But though it is a point not very interesting in itself, or in the sort of discussion and illustration which it admits, it is one which is very interesting in the applications that may be made of it; particularly as a clear view of the distinction which I wish to impress on your minds, will free you from much misconception, which has clouded the language and opinions of philosophers on this subject, and will prepare you, I flatter myself, for admitting, more readily, that simple arrangement of the intellectual phenomena which I have ventured to submit to you.

In some former severe discussions like the present, I endeavoured to extract for you some little consolation, from that very fortitude of attention which the discussion required,—pointing out to you the advantage of questions of this kind, in training the mind to those habits of serious thought and patient investigation, which, considered in their permanent relation to the intellectual character, are of infinitely greater importance than the instruction which the question itself may afford. “*Generosos animos labor nutrit.*” In the discipline of reason, as in the training of the athlete, it is not for a single victory, which it may give to the youthful champion, that the combat is to be valued, but for that knitting of the joints, and hardening of the muscles,—that quickness of eye and collectedness of effort, which it is forming for the struggles of more illustrious fields.

That the perception of a giant, which never before had co-existed with the idea of a dwarf, should yet be sufficient, without some prior association, to induce that idea, may seem very wonderful; but wonderful as it is, it is really not more mysterious, than if the

two ideas had co-existed, or succeeded each other, innumerable times. The great mystery is in the simple fact of the recurrence or spontaneous rise of any idea without the recurrence of the external cause which produced it, and when that external cause has ceased, perhaps, to have any existence. This fact, however, we must admit, whatever be our theory; and it is all which is necessary to the one theory: while the other, by supposing, or vaguely implying some actual union or association, prior to the suggestion, introduces a new mystery, and, in consequence of the very mystery which it introduces, renders the phenomena which it professes to explain still more difficult to be conceived; since the association, which it supposes to be necessary to the suggestion, must, on that supposition, in many cases, be the effect of that very suggestion to which it is supposed to give rise.

You will now, then, I hope, perceive,—or, I flatter myself, may already have perceived, without the necessity of so much repetition of the argument,—the reasons which led me to prefer the term *suggestion* to *association*, as a more accurate general term for all the spontaneous successions of our thought; since, by making the suggestion itself to depend on an association or combination of ideas prior to it, we should not merely have assumed the reality of a process of which we have no consciousness whatever, but should have excluded, by the impossibility of such previous combination, many of the most important classes of suggestions,—every suggestion that arises from the relations of objects which we perceive for the first time, and, indeed, every suggestion that does not belong, in the strictest sense, to Mr Hume's single class of *contiguity in time*.

That our suggestions do not follow each other loose-



ly and confusedly, is no proof of prior associations in the mind, but merely of the general constitutional tendency of the mind to exist, successively, in states that have certain relations to each other. There is nothing in the nature of our original perceptions, which could enable us to infer this regularity and limitation of our subsequent trains of thought. We learn these from experience alone; and experience does not teach us, that there is any such intervening process of mysterious union, as is supposed, but only, that when the mind has been affected in a certain manner, so as to have one perception or conception, it is, successively, and of itself, affected in certain other manners, so as to have other relative conceptions. If the association of ideas be understood to mean nothing more than this succession of ideas arising without an external cause, and involving no prior union of the ideas suggesting and suggested,—nor, in short, any influence previous to that which operates at the moment of the suggestion itself, though it would certainly, with this limited meaning, (which excludes what is commonly meant by the term association,) be a very awkward phrase,—still, if it were always understood in this limited sense alone, it might be used with safety. But in this sense,—the only sense in which it can be used without error,—it must always be remembered, that the association of ideas denotes as much the successions of ideas of objects which never have existed together before, as the successions of ideas of objects which have been perceived together; that there are not two separate mental processes, therefore, following perception, and necessary to the succession,—one by which ideas are primarily associated, and another by which they are subsequently suggested,—but that the association is, in truth, only another word for the fact of the sug-

gestion itself. All this, however, being admitted, it may perhaps be said,—what advantage is to be gained from the use of a simpler term, or even from the more accurate distinction which such a term denotes?

The principal advantage that is to be derived from it, is the great simplification which it allows of the phenomena, by the removal of much of that mystery which a more complicated theory had made to hang over some of the processes of thought. When suggestion was supposed to depend on former associations of ideas, and when, in many cases, it must have been felt to be difficult, or rather impossible, to discover any co-existence or immediate succession of the primary perceptions, by which such association could be supposed to be formed, it could scarcely fail to happen, as, indeed, truly took place, that many cumbrous distinctions, and still more cumbrous hypotheses, would be formed, to account for the apparent anomalies.

It is the use of this unfortunate phrase, indeed, rather than of the simpler term suggestion, which appears to me to have filled our intellectual systems with the names of so many superfluous powers. The supposed necessity, in our trains of thought, of some previous association, of course rendered it necessary that the conceptions ascribed to this cause should be such as before existed in a similar form, since, without this previous existence, they could not be supposed to admit of previous connexion; and, therefore, when the suggestions were very different, so as to have the semblance almost of a new creation, it became necessary to invent some new power distinct from that of association, to which they might be ascribed. What was in truth a mere simple suggestion, flowing from the same laws with other suggestions, became in this manner something more, and was ranked as a product of

fancy, or imagination,—nothing being so easy as the invention of a new name. A similar illusion gave rise to the supposition of various other intellectual powers—or, at least, favoured greatly the admission of such powers, by the difficulty of accounting for suggestions which could not have arisen from previous associations; and one simple power or susceptibility of the mind was thus metamorphosed into various powers, all distinct from each other, and distinct from that power of which they were only modifications.

The chief circumstance which probably led to the belief of some actual union or association of ideas, previous to suggestion, I conceive to have been the peculiar importance of that order of suggestions, of which proximity, and therefore former co-existence, or immediate succession of the direct objects of thought, are the distinguishing characteristic. If there had been no such order of suggestions as this, but conception had followed conception merely according to the other relations, such as those of analogy or contrast, we never should have thought of any association, or other prior influence, distinct from the suggestion itself. But, when objects perceived together, or in immediate succession, arise again together, or in immediate succession, as if linked by some invisible bonds, it is a very natural illusion that the suggestion itself should seem to depend on a mysterious union of this kind. The illusion is greatly strengthened by this circumstance, that it is to the relation of direct proximity of objects we have recourse, in all those processes of thought which have commonly been termed recollections, or voluntary reminiscences. We think of all the variety of events that happened at the time at which we know, that some event, now forgotten by us, occurred; and we pursue this whole series,



through its details, as if expecting to discover some tie that may give into our hand the fugitive feeling which we wish to detect. The suggestion which we desire, does probably at length occur, in consequence of this process; and we are hence very naturally accustomed to look back to a period preceding the suggestion as to the real source of the suggestion itself.

It must be remembered, too, that although the mind were truly susceptible of the influence in its trains of thought, of various relations of a different kind, as well as of those of contiguity, even these suggestions, though originally different, would seem, at length, reducible to this one paramount order; because, after the first suggestion which might have arisen from mere analogy or contrast, a real contiguity, in point of time, would be formed of the suggesting and suggested conception, which had become proximate in succession; and the same suggestion, therefore, when it recurred, might seem to have arisen as much from this contiguity, in a prior train of thought, as from the contrast or analogy, which of themselves might have been sufficient to produce it, without any such proximity of the direct images themselves.

In all these ways, it is very easy to perceive how, in considering every simple suggestion, our thought should be continually turned to the past, and the suggestion itself, therefore, be converted into association: the exceptions being forgotten, or receiving a different name, that we might satisfy ourselves with a general law, though exceptions, so important and so innumerable, might themselves have served for a proof that the general law was inaccurate.

After these remarks, then, I trust that you will not merely have seen the reasons which led me to prefer to the use of the ambiguous phrase *association*, the

substitution of the simpler term *suggestion*, but that you will be disposed also to admit the justness of that distinction on which the substitution was founded. The importance of the distinction, however, you will perceive more fully, in the applications that are afterwards to be made of it, in reducing, under simple suggestion, phenomena ascribed by philosophers to many different intellectual powers.

To this I shall proceed in my next Lecture.

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## LECTURE XLI.

*Reduction of certain Supposed Faculties to Simple Suggestion.—*

*I. Conception,—II. Memory.*

GENTLEMEN, my last Lecture was employed in considering the nature of that tendency of the mind, by which it exists, successively in the states which constitute the variety of our conceptions, in our trains of thought; my object being to ascertain whether this tendency depend on any previous intellectual process, constituting what has been termed a union or association of ideas, or, simply on the relations of the conceptions themselves, at the moment of suggestion, without any previous union or association whatever, of the idea or other feeling which suggests, with the idea or other feeling which is suggested. I explained to you the reasons which seem to lead us, in every case, in which conception follows conception, in trains that have a sort of wild regularity, to look back to the past, for some mysterious associations of our ideas, by which this regular confusion of their successions may be explained; though, in the phenomena

...and it is in virtue of any such association of ideas connecting process of any kind all of them to a common idea that the original perception and the subsequent suggestion.

It is a very common mistake to suppose that in consequence of these facts there is something prior and necessary to the actual operation of the simple principle of suggestion, that the phenomena of the mind have been referred to this principle because of the impossibility of finding a more easy and simple source of their association and the consequent necessity of inventing some new power for the production of phenomena which would not be reducible to suggestion or to differ from the common facts merely because we had exhausted the simple process of suggestion with unnecessary and false additions.

It will appear then will be to show how truly the theory of powers is unnecessary, and therefore unjustifiably based on reliable to the principle of simple suggestion: or at least to this simple principle in combination with some of those other principles which I pointed out as parts of our mental constitution in my arrangement of the phenomena of the mind.

It will be of advantage, however, previously, to take a slight retrospect of the principal points which may be considered as established, with respect to simple suggestion; that we may see more clearly what it is, from which the other supposed powers are said to be different.

In the first place, we can have no doubt of the general fact of suggestion, that conception follows conception, in our trains of thought, without any re-



currence of the external objects, which, as perceived, originally gave occasion to them.

As little can we doubt that these conceptions, as internal states of the mind, independent of any immediate influence of external things, do not follow each other loosely, but according to a certain general relation, or number of relations, which constitute what I have termed the primary laws of suggestion, and which exercise their influence variously, in different persons, and at different times, according to circumstances, which, as modifying the former, I have denominated secondary laws of suggestion.

In the third place, we have seen that they do not follow each other merely, the suggesting idea giving immediate place to the suggested; but that various conceptions, which arise at different moments, may co-exist, and form one compound feeling, in the same manner as various perceptions, that arise together, or at different moments, may co-exist, and form one compound feeling of another species; all that complexity of forms and colours, for example, which gives a whole world of wonders at once to our vision, or those choral sounds which flow mingled from innumerable vibrations that exist together, without confusion, in the small aperture of the ear, and in a single moment fill the soul with a thousand harmonies, as if, in the perception of so many co-existing sounds, it had a separate sense for every separate voice, and could exist, with a strange diffusive consciousness, in a simultaneous variety of states.

*Lastly*, we have seen that no previous association, or former connecting process, of any kind, is necessary for suggestion,—that we have no consciousness of any intermediate process between the primary perception and the subsequent suggestion, and that we are not

merely without the slightest consciousness of a process, which is thus gratuitously supposed, but that there are innumerable phenomena which it is not very easy to reconcile with the supposition, on any view of it, and which certainly, at least, cannot be reconciled with it, on that view of the primary laws of suggestion, which the assertors of a distinct specific Faculty of Association have been accustomed to take.

Let us now, then, apply the knowledge which we have thus acquired, and proceed to consider some of those forms of suggestion, which have been ranked as distinct intellectual powers.

That which its greater simplicity leads me to consider first, is what has been termed by philosophers the *Power of Conception*, which has been defined, the power that enables us to form a notion of an absent object of perception, or of some previous feeling of the mind. The definition of the supposed power is sufficiently intelligible; but is there reason to add the power thus defined, to our other mental functions, as a distinct and peculiar faculty?

That we have a certain mental power or susceptibility by which, in accordance with this definition, the perception of one object may excite the notion of some absent object, is unquestionably true. But this is the very function which is meant by the power of suggestion itself, when stripped of the illusion as to prior association; and if the conception be separated from the suggestion, nothing will remain to constitute the power of suggestion, which is only another name for the same power. I enter, for example, an apartment in my friend's house during his long absence from home; I see his flute, or the work of some favourite author lying on his table. The mere sight

of either of these awakes instantly my conception of my friend, though at the moment he might have been absent from my thought. I see him again present. If I look at the volume I almost think that I hear him arguing strenuously for the merits of his favourite, as in those evenings of social contention when we have brought poets and philosophers to war against poets and philosophers. If I look at the flute I feel instantly a similar illusion. I hear him again animating it with his very touch; breathing into it what might almost, without a metaphor, be said to be the breath of life; and giving it not utterance merely but eloquence. In these cases of simple suggestion, it is said the successive mental states which constitute the notions of my friend himself, of the arguments which I again seem to hear and combat, of the melodies that silently enchant me, are conceptions indicating, therefore, a power of the mind from which they arise, that, in reference to the effects produced by it, may be called the power of conception. But if they arise from a peculiar power of conception, and if there be a power of association or suggestion which is also concerned, how are these powers to be distinguished, and what part of the process is it which we owe to this latter power? If there were no suggestion of my friend, it is very evident that there could be no conception of my friend; and if there were no conception of him, it would be absurd to speak of a suggestion in which nothing was suggested. Whether we use the term suggestion or association in this case is of no consequence. Nothing more can be accurately meant by either term, in reference to the example which I have used, than the tendency of my mind, after existing in the state which constitutes the perception of the flute or volume, and of the room in



which I observe it, to exist immediately afterwards in that different state which constitutes the conception of my friend. The laws of suggestion or association are merely the general circumstances according to which conceptions or certain other feelings arise. There is not, in any case of suggestion, both a suggestion and a conception, more than there is, in any case of vision, both a vision and a sight. What one glance is to the capacity of vision, one conception is to the capacity of suggestion. We may *see* innumerable objects in succession; we may *conceive* innumerable objects in succession. But we see them because we are susceptible of vision; we conceive them because we have that susceptibility of spontaneous suggestion by which conceptions arise after each other in regular trains.

This duplication of a single power, to account for the production of a single state of mind, appears to me a very striking example of the influence of that misconception with respect to association, which I occupied so much of your time in attempting to dissipate. If association and suggestion had been considered as exactly synonymous, implying merely the succession of one state of mind to another state of mind, without any mysterious process of union of the two feelings prior to the suggestion, the attention of inquirers would, in this just and simple view, have been fixed on the single moment of the suggestion itself:—and I cannot think that any philosopher would, in this case, have contended for two powers as operating together at the very same moment, in the production of the very same conception; but that one capacity would have been regarded as sufficient for this one simple effect, whether it were termed, with more immediate reference to the secondary feel-

ing that is the effect, the power of conception, or, with more immediate reference to the primary feeling which precedes it as its cause, the power of suggestion or association. It is very different, however, when the conception—the one simple effect produced—is made to depend, not merely on the tendency of the mind to exist in that state at the particular moment at which the conception arises, but on some process of association, which may have operated at a considerable interval before; for, in that case, the process of association, which is supposed to have taken place at one period, must itself imply one power or function of the mind, and the actual suggestion, or rise of the conception, at an interval afterwards, some different power or function.

With respect to the supposed intellectual power of conception, then, as distinct from the intellectual power of association or suggestion, we may very safely conclude, that the belief of this is founded merely on a mistake as to the nature of association; that the power of suggestion and the power of conception are the same, both being only that particular susceptibility of the mind from which, in certain circumstances, conceptions arise,—or at least, that if the power of conception differ from the more general power of suggestion, it differs from it only as a part differs from the whole,—as the power of taking a single step differs from the power of traversing a whole field—the power of drawing a single breath from the general power of respiration—the moral susceptibility by which we are capable of forming one charitable purpose from that almost divine universality of benevolence, in a whole virtuous life, to which every moment is either some exertion for good or some wish for good, which comprehends within its

sphere of *action*, that has no limits but physical impossibility, every being whom it can instruct or amend, or relieve or gladden, and, in its sphere of generous *desire*, all that is beyond the limits of its power of benefiting.

The next supposed intellectual power to which I would call your attention, is the power of memory.

In treating of our suggestions, and consequently, as you have seen, of our conceptions, which are only parts of the suggested series, I have, at the same time, treated of our remembrances, or, at least of the more important part of our remembrances, because our remembrances are nothing more than conceptions united with the notion of a certain relation of time. They are conceptions of the past, felt as conceptions of the past, that is to say, felt as having a certain relation of antecedence to our present feeling. The remembrance is not a simple but a complex state of mind; and all which is necessary to reduce a remembrance to a mere conception, is to separate from it a part of the complexity, that part of it which constitutes the notion of a certain relation of antecedence. We are conscious of our present feeling whatever it may be; for this is, in truth, only another name for our consciousness itself. The moment of present time, at which we are thus conscious, is a bright point, ever moving, and yet, as it were, ever fixed, which divides the darkness of the future from the twilight of the past. It is, in short, what Cowley terms the whole of human life,—

“ A weak isthmus, that doth proudly rise  
Up betwixt two eternities.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cowley's Ode on Life and Fame, stanza i. verses 10, 11, slightly altered.

“ Vain, weak-built Isthmus, that dost proudly rise  
Up betwixt two eternities.”—Orig.



The present moment, then, though ever fleeting, is to us, as it were, a fixed point ; and it is a point which guides us in the most important of our measurements, in our retrospects of the past, and our hopes of the future. The particular feeling of any moment before the present, as it rises again in our mind, would be a simple conception, if we did not think of it, either immediately or indirectly, in relation to some other feeling earlier or later. It becomes a remembrance when we combine with it this feeling of relation—the relation which constitutes our notion of time ; for time, as far as we are capable of understanding it, or rather of feeling it, is nothing more than the varieties of this felt relation, which, in reference to one of the subjects of the relation, we distinguish by the word *before*,—in reference to the other, by the word *after*. It is a relation, I may remark, which we feel nearly in the same manner as we feel the relation which bodies bear to each other, as co-existing in space. We say of a house, that it is two miles from a particular village, half a mile from the river, a mile from the bridge, with a feeling of relation very similar to that with which we say of one event, that it occurred a month ago ; of another event, that it occurred in the memorable year of our first going to school ; of another, that it happened in our infancy. There is some point to which, in estimating distance of space, we refer the objects which we measure, as there is a point of time in the present moment, or in some event which we have before learned to consider thus relatively, to which, directly or indirectly, we refer the events of which we speak as past or future, or more or less recent.

If we had been incapable of considering more than two events together, we probably never should have invented the word *time*, but should have contented

ourselves with simpler words, expressive of the simple relation of the two. But we are capable of considering a variety of events, all of which are felt by us to bear to that state of mind which constitutes our present consciousness, some relation of priority or subsequence, which they seem to us to bear also reciprocally to each other; and the varieties of this relation oblige us to invent a general term for expressing them all. This general word, invented by us for expressing all the varieties of priority and subsequence, is *time*,—a word, therefore, which expresses no actual reality, but only relations that are felt by us in the objects of our conception. To think of time is not to think of anything existing of itself, for time is not a thing but a relation; it is only to have some conceptions of objects which we regard as prior and subsequent; and, without the conception of objects of some kind, as subjects of the relation of priority and subsequence, it is as little possible for us to imagine any time, as to imagine brightness or dimness without a single ray of light,—proportional magnitude without any dimensions,—or any other relation without any other subject. When the notion of time, then, is combined with any of our conceptions, as in memory, all which is combined with the simple conception is the feeling of a certain relation. To be capable of remembering, in short, we must have a capacity of the feelings which we term *relations*, and a capacity of the feelings which we term *conceptions*, that may be the subjects of the relations: but with these two powers no other is requisite,—no power of memory distinct from the conception and relation which that complex term denotes.

When I say that time, as far as we are capable of understanding it, is nothing more than a certain felt relation of certain conceptions of our own mind, I am

sufficiently aware of the necessity of this qualifying clause with respect to the limits of our understanding, and of the truth of the very striking remark of St Austin on this most obscure subject, that he knew well what time was till he was asked about it, and that then he knew nothing of it:—"Quid ergo est tempus? Quis hoc facile explicuerit? Si nemo a me quærat, scio. Si quærenti explicare velim, nescio."

It is truly one of those subjects which, instead of growing clearer as we gaze upon it, grows more obscure beneath our very gaze. All of which we can be said to be conscious, is certainly the present moment alone. But of that complex state of mind which forms to us the present moment, there are parts which impress us irresistibly, and beyond all the power of scepticism, with the relation which, as I have already said, we term *priority*, in reference to the one, and *succession* or *subsequence* in reference to the other; time, as felt by us, being this relation of the two, and nothing more. It is not because we have a previous notion of time that we regard objects as prior and posterior, more than we regard objects as large or small, because we have a previous notion of magnitude; but time, as a general word, is significant to us merely of the felt varieties of the relation of priority and subsequence, as magnitude is a general word, expressive of the felt varieties of comparative dimensions.

But I have already dwelt too long on a point which I may very probably have made darker to you than it was before; but which, impressed as I am with the truth of St Austin's remark, I scarcely can venture to flatter myself with the hope of having made much more distinctly conceivable by you.

Obscure as the relation of priority and succession



THE IS HOWEVER WITH IT IN THE IMAGINE WITH CON-  
 TINUOUS OF PERCEPTIONS. IT IS STILL ONLY A CERTAIN  
 RELATION. AND THE FEELING OF THIS RELATION DOES NOT  
 UNLESS ANY FEELING POWER PRACTICALLY DISTINCT FROM  
 THE WHICH PERCEIVES CLEAR RELATIONS. WHETHER CLEAR OR  
 OBSCURE. THESE IDEAS WE SHOULD BE INCLINED TO  
 ASSESS A CERTAIN NAME OF SOME NEW FACULTY OF THE  
 MIND TO OVER RELATION WITH WHICH THE MIND CAN BE  
 EMPLOYED IN THE AMONG. INFINITE VARIETY OF THESE FEEL-  
 INGS. VISION. PERCEPTION. IS NOT A DISTINCT INTELLECTUAL  
 FEELING BUT A DEEPER CONCEPTION OR SUGGESTION COM-  
 BINED WITH THE FEELING OF A PARTICULAR RELATION,—THE  
 RELATION IN WHICH WE GIVE THE NAME OF PRIORITY, A FEEL-  
 ING THAT IS NOT ESSENTIAL. INDEED TO THE ACCOMPANYING  
 CONCEPTION THAT OUR TIME ADMITS OF BEING COMBINED  
 WITH IT IN THE SAME MANNER AS THE RELATION OF PLACE,  
 OR ANY OTHER RELATIONAL ADMITS OF BEING COMBINED WITH  
 OTHER CONCEPTIONS OR PERCEPTIONS. IT CANNOT BE DENIED,  
 FOR EXAMPLE, THAT IN THE DARKNESS OF THE NIGHT, AFTER  
 A PERIOD OF MANY YEARS AND AT THE DISTANCE PRO-  
 BABLY OF MANY THOUSAND MILES WE HAVE THE FACULTY OF  
 REMEMBERING, OR OF BEHOLDING AGAIN, ALMOST WITH THE  
 SAME VIVIDNESS AS WHEN WE TORE ITS STEEP ASCENT, THE  
 MOUNTAIN WHICH WE HAVE BEEN ACCUSTOMED PERHAPS TO  
 ASCEND IN OUR BOYHOOD, FOR THE PLEASURE OF LOOKING  
 DOWN, FROM ITS TOPMOST ROCK, WITH A SORT OF PRIDE AT  
 THE HEIGHT WHICH WE HAD MASTERED. TO BEHOLD MEN-  
 TALLY THIS EMINENCE AGAIN, WITHOUT ANY FEELING OF THE  
 RELATION OF PAST TIME, IS TO HAVE ONLY A CONCEPTION OF  
 THE MOUNTAIN. WE CANNOT THINK OF THE MOUNTAIN  
 ITSELF, HOWEVER, EVEN FOR A FEW MOMENTS, WITHOUT  
 THINKING ALSO OF THE SCENE WHICH WE HAVE BEEN ACCUS-  
 TOMED TO SURVEY FROM IT—THE HUMBLER HILLS AROUND,  
 THAT SERVED ONLY TO MAKE THE VALLEY BETWEEN APPEAR  
 LOWER THAN WE SHOULD OTHERWISE HAVE CONCEIVED IT TO

be, and to make us feel still more proudly the height which we had attained,—the scattered villages, the woods, the streams, in various directions, mingling and resting in the motionless expanse of the lake. By comprehending gradually more of these objects in our mental view, we have widened our conception, indeed, but it is still a conception only; and we are not said to exercise any power distinct from that of conception or suggestion. Yet we cannot thus conceive the landscape as a whole, without feeling various relations which its parts bear to each other in space, as near or distant, high or low,—the wood hanging over the village, the spire gleaming through the trees, the brook hurrying down to the mill and the narrow pathway by its side. These relations, which give unity to the scene, are relations of space only, and they do not hinder our complex feeling from being denominated simply a conception. So far, then, no new power is said to be concerned. If, however, in addition to all these local relations, we introduce but a single relation of time,—the thought of the most trifling circumstance which occurred when we last ascended the same mountain, and beheld the same scene—though this new part of the complex feeling have risen, according to the same exact laws of suggestion, as the conception of the mere scene, the conception is then instantly said to indicate a new power, and what was before a conception is a conception no longer. In one sense, indeed, there is truly the operation of a new power, for there is a new relation most certainly felt; and every relation felt implies a power or susceptibility in the mind of feeling this relation. But the relations of co-existence in space are not less relations than those of succession in time; and both or neither, therefore, when

co-existing with our conceptions, should be said to indicate a new intellectual faculty.

The state of mind, in memory, is, as I have already said, a complex one,—a conception, and a feeling of relation. But it admits of very easy analysis into these two parts, and, therefore, does not require the supposition of any new power to comprehend it, more than the complex state of mind, which results from the combination of the simple sensations of warmth and fragrance, requires the supposition of a new power to comprehend it, distinct from the separate senses to which the elementary feelings, if existing alone, would be referred. The conception, which forms one element of the remembrance, is referable to the capacity of simple suggestion, which we have been considering; the feeling of the relation of priority, which forms the other element of the remembrance, is referable, like all our other feelings of relation, to the capacity of relative suggestion, which we are afterwards to consider. It is merely as this relation of priority is or is not felt, that the state of mind, in which there is pictured some absent object or past feeling, has the name of a conception or the name of a remembrance; and that part of the complex whole which is a mere conception, does not differ from the common products of suggestion, but, as we have seen, in treating of our conceptions in general, is merely a particular form, or result, of that general power of suggestion, which gives a second being to the whole shadowy train of our thought. Indeed, since one of the relations, according to which association or suggestion is said to take place, is, by every writer who treats of the laws of association, allowed to be that of priority, or former succession in time, it would surely have been a very singular arrangement



if the conceptions, arising according to this very relation, were to be held as not fairly referable to the class to which they have previously been ascribed; and that what renders them associate should be itself the very cause, for which, and for which alone, they are to be excluded from the class of associations.

Simple memory, then, it appears, is nothing more than a particular suggestion, combined with the feeling of the relation of priority; and all the conceptions, therefore, which it involves, arise according to the laws which regulate suggestion in general. The same resemblances, contrasts, contiguities, give rise to our conceptions of objects, whether we do or do not consider those objects in the relation of priority, which they bear to our present feeling, or to any other event. In journeying along a road which I have never passed before, some form of the varying landscape may recall to me the scenery around the home which I have left; and it suggests it equally by its mere resemblance, whether it recall it to me as a simple picture, or remind me, at the same time, that it is the very home which I have left, and that, as many weeks have intervened since I saw it, many weeks are likely also to pass before I see it again.

In simple memory, then, it will be allowed, that conception follows conception by the ordinary laws of suggestion, as much as in those conceptions to which we do not attach, that is to say, with which there is not combined, any notion of time. But there is a species of memory, which is said to be under our control,—that memory combined with desire of remembering something forgotten, to which we commonly give the name of recollection. We will the existence of certain ideas, it is said, and they arise in consequence of our volition; though, assuredly, to will

any idea, is to know what we will, and therefore to be conscious of that very idea, which we surely need not desire to know, when we already know it, so well as to will its actual existence.

The contradiction implied in this direct volition of any particular idea, is indeed so manifest, that the assertion of such a direct power over the course of our thought is now pretty generally abandoned. But still it is affirmed, with at least equal incongruity, that we have it in our power to will certain conceptions indirectly, and that there is, therefore, a species of memory which is not mere suggestion, but follows, in part at least, other laws. This indirect volition, however, as I have shown in some paragraphs of my *Essay on Cause and Effect*,<sup>1</sup> is only another form of that very direct volition of ideas, the absurdity of which it is introduced to obviate. Thus, if I wish to remember a piece of news which was communicated to me by a friend, it is acknowledged, indeed, that I cannot will the conception of this immediately and directly, since that would be to know it already; but I am said to have the power of calling up such ideas as I know to have co-existed with it, the place at which the news was told me, the person who told it, and various circumstances of our conversation, at the same time; and this supposed power of calling up such relative ideas, is that indirect power over our course of thought which we are said to possess. But, surely, if these ideas of the circumstances that formerly accompanied the event which I wish to remember, arise, of themselves, to the mind, according to the simple course of suggestion, there is not even in-

<sup>1</sup> See, particularly, 2d edit. p. 72-79, 3d edit. p. 73-79. The whole question about the direct or indirect volition of Ideas, is fully discussed in sect. iii. of 3d edit. of that Essay, p. 41-79.

direct volition in the parts of the spontaneous train; and, if they do not arise of themselves, but are separately willed, there is then as direct volition, and consequently as much absurdity, involved in this calling up of the person, the place, and the other accompanying circumstances, as in calling up the very conception itself, which is the object of all this search. In either case, we must be supposed to will to know that, of which the will to know it implies the knowledge. The only difference is, that, instead of one direct volition, which is acknowledged, or which must be acknowledged to be absurd, we have now many separate direct volitions, and have consequently multiplied the inconsistency which we wished to avoid. The true and simple theory of the recollection is to be found in the permanence of the desire, and the natural spontaneous course of suggestion. I do not call up the ideas of the person and the place; but these, by their relation to the desire which I feel, arise uncalled; and when these have arisen, the suggestion of some part of the conversation at that place, and with that person is a very natural effect of this mere conception of the person and of the place. If that particular part of the discourse be thus simply suggested, which I wished to remember, my object is gained, and my desire, of course, ceases; if not, my desire still continuing, and being itself now more strongly, because more recently associated with the conceptions of the person and the place, keeps them constantly before me, till, in the variety of suggestions to which they spontaneously give rise, I either obtain, at last, the remembrance which I wish, or, by some new suggestion, am led into a new channel of thought, and forget altogether that there was anything which I wished to remember. What is termed voluntary recollection then, whether



direct, or indirect, is nothing more than the co-existence of some vague and indistinct desire with our simple trains of suggestion.

It is a complex feeling, or series of feelings, of which the continued desire, and a variety of successive relative conceptions, are parts; but the co-existence of the train of conceptions, with an unsatisfied desire, though a complex state of mind, is not the exercise of any new power, distinct from the elementary powers or feelings which compose it. We have only to perform our mental analysis, as in any other complex phenomena of the mind, and the elements instantly appear.

Such, then, is memory, not a simple affection of the mind, the result of a peculiar power, but a combination of two elementary feelings, the more important of which is to be traced to the laws of simple suggestion, while the other element is referable to a power that is afterwards to be considered by us.

In my remarks on the secondary laws of suggestion, I considered, very fully, those circumstances which diversify the general power of suggestion, in different individuals, and which thus give occasion to all the varieties of conception or remembrance, in individuals, to whom the mere primary laws of suggestion may be supposed to have been nearly equal. It will not be necessary for me, therefore, to revert to these at present, as explanatory of the varieties of memory; since the same secondary laws, which diversify our suggestions as mere conceptions, without any notion of priority combined with them, diversify them, in like manner, when the notion of this relation is combined with them.

In estimating the power of memory, however, in

those striking diversities of it which appear in different individuals, I must warn you against an error into which you may naturally fall, if you pay attention chiefly to the more obvious suggestions, which arise and display themselves in the common intercourse of life. It is in this way that a good memory, which is, in itself, so essential an accompaniment of profound and accurate judgment, has fallen into a sort of proverbial disrepute, as if unfriendly to judgment, or indicative of a defect in this nobler part of our intellectual constitution. In the cases, however, which have led to this very erroneous remark, it is not the quantity, if I may so express it, of the power of memory, but the peculiar species of it, that, by the sort of connexions which it involves, presents itself to us more readily, and seems more absurd, merely by coming thus more frequently before our view.

What we are too ready to consider exclusively as memory, is the suggestion which takes place, according to the mere relations of contiguity in time and place, of the very objects themselves, without regard to the conceptions which arise in our trains of thought by the same power of spontaneous suggestion, but which arise according to other relations, and which, therefore, we never think of ascribing to the same simple power. It is not a good memory, in its best sense, as a rich and retentive store of conceptions, that is unfriendly to intellectual excellence, poetic or philosophic, but a memory of which the predominant tendency is to suggest objects or images which existed before in the very order in which, as objects or images, they existed before, according to the merely imitative relations of contiguity. The richer the memory, and consequently the greater the number of images that may arise to the poet, and of powers and

effects that may arise to the philosopher, the more copious, in both cases, will be the suggestions of analogy, which constitute poetic invention or philosophic discovery; and the more copious the suggestions of analogy may be, the richer and more diversified, it is evident, must be the inventive power of the mind. It is the quality of memory, then, as suggesting objects in their old and familiar sequences of contiguity, not the quantity of the store of suggestions, that is unfriendly to genius; though, as I before remarked, this very difference of quality may, to superficial observers, seem like a difference of the quantity of the actual power.

It is in common conversation chiefly that we judge of the excellence of the memory of others, and that we feel our own defects of it,—and the species of relation which forms by far the most important tie of things, in ordinary discourse, is that of previous contiguity. We talk of things which happened at certain times, and in certain places; and he who remembers these best, seems to us to have the best memory, though the other more important species of suggestion, according to analogy, may, in his mind, be wholly unproductive, and though no greater number of images, therefore, may be stored in it, and no greater number of spontaneous suggestions arise; but, on the contrary, perhaps, far fewer than in the more philosophic minds, whose admirable inventions and discoveries, as we term them, we admire, but whose supposed bad memories, which are in truth only different modifications of the same principle of suggestion, we lament.

The most ignorant of the vulgar, in describing a single event, pour out a number of suggestions of contiguity, which may astonish us indeed, though they



are a proof not that they remember more, but only that their prevailing suggestions take place, according to one almost exclusive relation. It is impossible to listen to a narrative of the most simple event, by one of the common people, who are unaccustomed to pay much attention to events but as they occur together, without being struck with a readiness of suggestion of innumerable petty circumstances which might seem like superiority of memory, if we did not take into account the comparatively small number of their suggestions of a different class. They do not truly remember more than others, but their memory is different in quality from the memory of others. Suggestions arise in their minds which do not arise in other minds; but there is at least an equal number of suggestions that arise in the minds of others, of which their minds, in the same circumstances, would be wholly unsusceptible. Yet still, as I have said, to common observers, their memory will appear quick and retentive, in a peculiar and far surpassing degree. How many trifling facts, for example, does Mrs Quickly heap together to force upon Sir John Falstaff's remembrance his promise of marriage. The passage is quoted by Lord Kames, as a very lively illustration of the species of recollections of a vulgar mind.

"In the minds of some persons, thoughts and circumstances crowd upon each other by the slightest connexions. I ascribe this to a bluntness in the discerning faculty; for a person who cannot accurately distinguish between a slight connexion and one that is more intimate, is equally affected by each: such a person must necessarily have a great flow of ideas, because they are introduced by any relation indifferently; and the slighter relations, being without number,

furnish ideas without end. This doctrine is, in a lively manner, illustrated by Shakspeare:—

“*Falstaff*. What is the gross sum that I owe thee?

“*Hostess*. Marry, if thou wert an honest man, thyself and thy money too. Thou didst swear to me on a parcel-gilt goblet, sitting in my Dolphin-chamber, at the round table, by a sea-coal fire, on Wednesday in Whitsun-week, when the Prince broke thy head for likening him to a singing man of Windsor; thou didst swear to me then, as I was washing thy wound, to marry me, and make me my lady thy wife. Canst thou deny it? Did not Goodwife Keech, the butcher's wife, come in then, and call me Gossip Quickly? coming in to borrow a mess of vinegar; telling us she had a good dish of prawns; whereby thou didst desire to eat some; whereby I told thee they were ill for a green wound. And didst not thou, when she was gone down stairs, desire me to be no more so familiarity with such poor people, saying that ere long they should call me madam? And didst thou not kiss me, and bid me fetch thee thirty shillings? I put thee now to thy book oath, deny it if thou canst.”—*Second Part Henry IV. Act ii. Scene 2.*

“On the other hand, a man of accurate judgment cannot have a great flow of ideas; because the slighter relations, making no figure in his mind, have no power to introduce ideas. And hence it is, that accurate judgment is not friendly to declamation or copious eloquence. This reasoning is confirmed by experience; for it is a noted observation, That a great or comprehensive memory is seldom connected with a good judgment.”<sup>1</sup>

It is not from any defect of memory, as Lord Kames thinks, that fewer of the ideas which prevail in common

<sup>1</sup> Elements of Criticism, Chap. I.

conversation, arise to a mind of accurate judgment ; but because the prevailing tendencies to suggestion, in such a mind, are of a species that have little relation to the dates, &c., of the occurrences that are the ordinary topics of familiar discourse. The memory differs in quality, not in quantity ; or, at least, the defect of these ordinary topics is not itself a proof that the general power of suggestion is less vigorous.

In the case of extemporary eloquence, indeed, the flow of mere words may be more copious in him who is not accustomed to dwell on the permanent relations of objects, but on the slighter circumstances of perception and local connexion. Yet this is far from proving that the memory of such a person, which implies much more than the recurrence of verbal signs, is less comprehensive ; on the contrary, there is every reason to suppose, that, unless probably in a few very extraordinary cases, which are as little to be taken into account, in a general estimate of this kind, as the form and functions of monsters in a physiological inquiry, the whole series of suggestions, of which a profound and discriminating mind is capable, is greater, upon the whole, than the number of those which rise so readily to the mind of a superficial thinker. The great difference is, that the wealth of the one is composed merely of those smaller pieces which are in continual request, and therefore brought more frequently to view ; while the abundance of the other consists chiefly in those more precious coins, which are rather deposited than carried about for current use, but which, when brought forward, exhibit a magnificence of wealth, to which the petty counters of the multitude are comparatively insignificant.



## LECTURE XLII.

*Reduction of certain supposed Mental Faculties to Simple Suggestion.—III. Imagination.*

GENTLEMEN, the inquiries which have occupied us with respect to the phenomena of the principle of suggestion, have, I trust, shown you what that principle is, as distinguished from the other principles of our mental constitution. It becomes necessary, however, in justification of that simple arrangement which I ventured to propose to you, to consider this principle not merely in relation to the phenomena which I have included under it, but also in relation to other arrangements, and to show, that this one general tendency of the mind is sufficient to account for a variety of phenomena which have been referred to peculiar powers of the understanding. This I endeavoured to prove in my last lecture, with respect to two of these supposed intellectual powers—the powers, as they have been termed, of *Conception* and *Memory*.

In the first place, I showed, of conception, that, far from being distinguishable from suggestion, it is only a particular instance or operation of that very principle: what are called the laws of suggestion or association, in relation to our mere ideas, being nothing more than the general circumstances, according to which conceptions follow conceptions, in our trains of thought. A particular conception, indeed, as one state of mind, differs from that general tendency of suggestion, in consequence of which it arises; but it differs from it only in the same way as any other particular feeling differs from that general mental susceptibility to which we trace it; as our sensation of a

particular sound or odour, for example, differs from the senses of smell and hearing, by which we are capable of perceiving all the varieties of sounds and odours. The power of suggestion is that capacity of the mind by which conceptions arise; as the power of vision is that capacity of the mind by which we are sensible of the varieties of light; and we might as well speak of a power of seeing a particular colour, distinct from vision, as of a power of conceiving the same particular colour, distinct from the influence of the general tendency of the mind that is termed by us suggestion. When I hear the sound of my friend's name, and the conception of my friend immediately arises, there is not, in the production of this one mental state, the operation both of a power of association or suggestion, and of a power of conception; but there is a development of that single capacity, or property of the mind, in consequence of which certain conceptions arise, after certain other conceptions or perceptions. We may call this particular property either the capacity of conception, or the capacity of suggestion, as we please; the one term, *conception*, having more immediate reference to the object conceived,—the other, *suggestion*, to the conceiving mind; but the feeling itself of which we speak, the particular conception suggested, whether we regard it in reference to the mind in which it rises, or to the object which it seems to represent; and, by whatever word, or combination of words, we may choose to designate it, is still only one affection of the mind; as a man is still the same individual being, whatever name we may give to him, whether we call him simply a man, or speak of him by his own individual appellation, or in his different relations to other beings like himself, a son, a brother, a father. The mistake which has led to this distinction of the

power of conception from the power of suggestion, by which our conceptions arise. I showed to be that vague, but universal mistake, as to the nature of association, which supposes a certain mysterious union of the suggesting and suggested idea, to precede their mutual suggestion: in which case this supposed mysterious union, and the rise of the conception itself, occurring at different periods, might indeed be allowed to be indicative of different mental powers or properties.

After showing our conceptions to be only particular modifications or examples of the general power of suggestion,—which would be a word absolutely without meaning, if nothing were suggested,—I proceeded to consider our remembrances, analyzing these into two distinct parts, a particular conception of some object or feeling remembered, and the accompanying feeling of a certain relation of priority to our present consciousness. The simple conception which forms one of the elements of the remembrance, and differs in no respect from the conceptions that are unaccompanied with the notion of a relation of time, is of course reducible to the power of simple suggestion, to which all our conceptions are to be referred; the feeling of the relation of priority, which forms its other element, is, like our feeling of every other relation, an effect of that general susceptibility of relation suggested, which we are to consider afterwards. The remembrance, therefore, being a complex feeling, is a proof of these two susceptibilities of the mind, to which we owe the constituent elementary feelings; but it is not a proof of any third power, more than the sight of a rose, combined with the perception of its fragrance, is a proof that we possess some third sense or power, distinct from those which give us the elementary sensations of colour and odour, of which our complex sensation



is formed. What we term memory, then, in distinction from mere conception, is not a new power, but merely a complex result of different mental capacities; as my complex feeling, when I look at an extensive landscape, and regard the various contiguities, or other local relations of the parts to each other, high or low, above or beneath, remote or near, is a proof indeed that I have a capacity of discerning relations, as well as a capacity of vision, but not a proof of any power distinct from both, and requiring, therefore, a separate place in our primary classifications of the intellectual functions. The relations of time, in this respect, do not differ from the relations of place; our conceptions may be combined with the one as much as with the other; and the remembrance, in every case, is a mere conception, like any other mere conception, combined with a certain feeling of relation, and nothing more.

Of the inestimable advantages which we receive from that composition of feelings which constitutes memory, I have already treated too fully to need to recall them to your attention. You know it as that to which we are indebted for all the knowledge which we possess, not merely for everything which raises us above the ignorance and superstition of the vulgar, to the noble luxuries of science and enlightened belief, but for everything which raises us above that state of unreflecting imbecility, compared with which the dull glimpses of thought that determine the half-instinctive actions of the idiot, in avoiding danger, and seeking the gratification of his animal appetites, would be wisdom and philosophy. In the rich and ever-ready stores of a well-cultivated mind, we have the only image, which we can in any way acquire, of the Omniscience of the Sovereign Intellect,—of that BEING, to whom omni-

science, in all its infinity of comprehension of whatever is, and of whatever is to be, is the knowledge only of the wonders of His own creative power. We acquire our knowledge slowly, but we retrace it rapidly. The universe itself, when we have enriched our memory with the knowledge of its laws, may thus, in some measure, be said to be comprised in a single retrospective thought of man,—in a single thought of the frail and dependent creature, who, as an individual, is scarcely to be counted as anything in that very infinity which he comprehends and measures :—

“What wealth, in Memory’s firm record,  
Which, *should it perish*, could this world *recall*,  
In colours fresh, *originally* bright,  
From the dark shadows of o’erwhelming years.”

Young.

Nor is it only intellectual wealth which we thus acquire and preserve ; it is by our remembrances that we are truly moral beings, because we owe to them the very conception of everything which can be the object of morality. Without them there could be no esteem, no gratification for kindness received, no compassion for those who are in sorrow, no love of what is honourable and benevolent. How many of our purest affections might we trace, through a long series of reciprocal kindnesses, to the earliest years of our boyhood—to the field of our sports—to the nursery—to the very cradle in which our smile answered only still fonder smiles that hung ceaseless around it ! The Greeks in their Theogony, by a happy allegorical illustration of the importance of this principle to all the exercises of fancy and the understanding, fabled the Muses to be Daughters of Memory. They might, with equal truth, have given the same parentage to the Virtues.

The next class of phenomena, ascribed erroneously to a peculiar intellectual power, which remains to be considered by us, is that which comprehends the phenomena of imagination. We not merely perceive objects, and conceive or remember them simply as they were, but we have the power of combining them in various new assemblages,—of forming at our will, with a sort of delegated omnipotence, not a single universe merely, but a new and varied universe, with every succession of our thought. The materials of which we form them are, indeed, materials that exist in every mind; but they exist in every mind only as the stones exist shapeless in the quarry, that require little more than mechanic labour to convert them into common dwellings, but that rise into palaces and temples only at the command of architectural genius.

“Indistinct,

In vulgar bosoms, and unnoticed, lie  
These stores of secret wealth. But some there are  
Conscious of Nature, and the rule which Man  
O'er Nature holds; some who, within themselves  
Retiring, from the trivial scenes of chance  
And momentary passion, can at will  
Call up these fair exemplars of the mind,  
Review their features, scan the secret laws  
Which bind them to each other, and display  
By forms, or sounds, or colours, to the sense  
Their latent charms. The Bard, nor length, nor depth,  
Nor place, nor form controls. To eyes, to ears,  
To every organ of the copious mind,  
He offereth all its treasures. Him the hours,  
The seasons him obey; and changeful time  
Sees him at will keep measure with his flight,  
At will outstrip it. To enhance his toil,  
He summoneth from the uttermost extent  
Of things, which God hath taught him, every form  
Auxiliar, every power; and all beside  
Excludes imperious. His prevailing hand  
Gives to corporeal essence life and sense,



And every stately function of the soul.  
 The soul itself to him obsequious lies  
 Like matter's passive heap ; and, as he wills,  
 To reason and affection he assigns  
 Their just alliances, their just degrees :  
 Whence his peculiar honours ; whence the race  
 Of men, who people his delightful world,  
 Transcend as far the uncertain sons of earth  
 As earth itself to his delightful world  
 The palm of spotless beauty doth resign."<sup>1</sup>

Such are the sublime functions of imagination. But we must not conceive, merely because they are sublime, that they comprehend the whole office of imagination, or even its most important uses. It is of far more importance to mankind, as it operates in the common offices of life,—in those familiar feelings of every hour, which we never think of referring to any faculty, or of estimating their value in reference to other classes of feelings. What are all those pictures of the future which are for ever before our eyes, in the successive hopes, and fears, and designs of life, but imaginations, in which circumstances are combined that never perhaps, in the same forms and proportions, have existed in reality, and which, very probably, are never to exist but in those very hopes and fears, which we have formed ? The writer of romance gives secret motives and passions to the characters which he invents, and adds incident to incident in the long series of compli-

<sup>1</sup> Pleasures of Imagination, second form of the poem, B. IV. v. 66-130 ; with the substitution, in v. 68, of "Stores of secret wealth," instead of

"Pleasing stores, unless the casual force  
 Of things external prompt the heedless mind  
 To recognise her wealth."

The addition after "sense," in v. 78, (or v. 11, as quoted,) of "Their latent charms ;" in the next verse the exclusion of the verses from 79 to "will," in v. 108, and the exclusion also of v. 127.

cated action which he develops. What he does, we, too, are doing every hour;—contriving events that never are to happen, imagining motives and passions, and thinking our little romances, of which ourselves, as may be supposed, are the primary heroes, but in the plot of which there is a sufficient complication of adventures of those whom we love, and those whom we dislike, connected with the main piece, or episodically intermingled. Our romances of real life, though founded upon facts, are, in their principal circumstances, fictions still; and, though the fancy which they display may not be as brilliant, it is still the same in kind with that which forms and fills the history of imaginary heroes and heroines. The dullest plodder over the obscurest desk, who sums up, in the evening, his daily tables of profit and loss, and who rises in the morning with the sole object of adding a few ciphers to that book of pounds and pence, which contains the whole annual history of his life,—even he, while he half lays down his quill to think of future prices and future demands, or future possibilities of loss, has his visions and inspirations like the sublimest poet,—visions of a very different kind, indeed, from those to which poets are accustomed, but involving as truly the inspirations of fancy.

For these humble cases of imagination, it might perhaps be admitted, by those who are not aware how exactly they resemble in kind the sublimer examples of it, that no peculiar intellectual power different from simple suggestion is necessary. But is there not some peculiar power exerted in the splendid works of eloquence and poetic art; in those fictions which seem to give all the reality of nature to ideal things, or to add some new majesty or loveliness even to the very magnificence of nature itself, and which would seem.

therefore, to raise art above nature, if this very art were not one of the forms which nature itself assumes?

In these, too, if we analyze the phenomena with sufficient minuteness, we shall find results similar to those which we discovered in our analysis of the former tribes of phenomena, ascribed in like manner erroneously to peculiar powers.

To this analysis let us now proceed.

Imagination has been generally regarded as implying a voluntary selection and combination of images, for the production of compounds different from those which nature exhibits. This opinion, to whatever extent it may be true, is certainly false in part at least.

We have seen, in considering some other mental processes, that these are rendered very different in appearance by the union of desire; that mere perception, in this way, becomes attention—mere memory, recollection. A similar difference is produced by the union of the same feeling in the phenomena which we are at present considering.

Imagination, then, may be considered in two different lights; as it takes place without desire, or as it takes place with desire or intention. Let us consider, then, in the *first* place, those new complex conceptions which, when there is no accompanying desire, arise and start, as it were, upon the mind, in its passive trains of thought.

That there is imagination, or new combination of images and feelings unaccompanied with any desire, and consequently altogether void of selection, is as true as that there is memory without intentional reminiscence. In the trains of our thought, conceptions rise often simply as they have existed before; they



rise often mixed in various forms and proportions, as they never have existed before; and in both cases equally without any desire on our part. We as little will the varying scenery of our reveries, and all the strange forms which seem to people them, as we will the conception of any one with whom we are acquainted, when it rises to us in instant suggestion, merely on reading his familiar name.

I may conceive gold, it is said,—I may conceive a mountain; and these states of my mind, which are only faint transcripts of the past, are simple conceptions. But if I conceive a golden mountain which I never saw, I must, it is said, have put together these two conceptions: and this conception, different from any thing in nature, is, in strict language, not a mere conception, but an imagination.

Has any thing, however, taken place in this last case, different from what occurred in the two former?

The argument which I used in treating of voluntary reminiscence, is equally applicable in the present instance. I then showed you the absurdity of supposing that we can will the existence of any particular idea; since this would be to suppose us either to will without knowing what we willed, which is absurd, or to know already what we willed to know, which is not less absurd. In like manner, I cannot have selected the images of gold and a mountain with the intention of forming the compound of a golden mountain; since it is very evident that, if I willed that particular compound, I must have had the conception of a golden mountain previously to my conception of a golden mountain. The argument in this case is surely demonstrative; and the same argument will apply equally to every other individual case that may be supposed, whether the images be few or many,—transient, or

continued through the longest reveries. If we select images with the view of forming a particular compound, we must already have formed this compound; and to select them for no purpose whatever, is, in truth, not to select at all.

But if there cannot have been any selection of images for composing with them the notion of a golden mountain, how happens it that the conception of this object, so different from any thing we have ever seen, should arise in the mind?

For the solution of this supposed difficulty, I might remark, that it is far from necessary to suggestion, that there should be any complete resemblance of the object suggested to that which suggests it, or that they should formerly have been proximate as the direct images of things existing together; and that, on the same principle as that by which a giant suggests a pigmy, or, still more, as analogous objects suggest objects merely analogous,—a tempest, for example, the short violence of mortal tyranny, or a day of vernal sunshine, the serene benevolence of its God,—so the mere conception of a mountain of one substance or colour, may suggest the analogous conception of a mountain of gold. But, though this general tendency to analogous suggestions might seem, perhaps, sufficient to explain the whole difficulty, the true theory of this, and of every other species of complex conception, appears to me to depend, not on this general tendency merely, but, in a great degree also, on that fact with respect to suggestion, which I stated and illustrated in a former Lecture,—the fact that various conceptions, in that particular sense of co-existence or complexity, which I explained to you as all that can be understood in the case of mind, may exist together, forming one complex feeling, and that one

part of this complexity may suggest one conception, while another part suggests a different conception, that may, in like manner unite, and form one harmonizing whole. The conception of the colour of gold, for example, and the conception of a mountain, may be thus, as it were, separately suggested, by parts of some preceding group of images co-existing in the mind; or the conception of a mountain remaining, its greenness or brownness, which are parts of the complex feeling, may, as colours, suggest various other colours, in the same way as if the conception of the form of the mountain had ceased; the colours thus suggested by some former colour,—that of gold among the rest,—coalescing, as they arise, with the remaining conception of the projecting mass; and all this happens, not in consequence of any selection of ours, but merely in conformity with the common laws of suggestion; with those laws by which, as I have shown to you in every instance of vision, a mere sensation of colour continues to co-exist with what is in truth only an associate conception of some particular tangible form, and to blend itself in intimate diffusion with the conception which it has suggested, as if the eye were itself capable of originally distinguishing convexity, concavity, and every varied form of position and magnitude.

The momentary groups of images that arise, independently of any desire or choice on our part, and arise in almost every minute to almost every mind, constitute by far the greater number of our imaginations; and to suppose a predetermining selection necessary to every new complex conception, would therefore be almost to annihilate imagination itself. It might leave it, indeed, to the writers of poetry and romance, and to all who are in the habit of embellish-



ing their conversation with the graces and the wonders of extemporary romance; but, in the greater number of mankind, it would be to annihilate it wholly; since in them, there is no intentional creation of images, but their fancy presents to them spontaneous images; or rather, to speak more accurately, since fancy is but a general term, expressive of the variety of these very states of the mind, their mind, in consequence of its own original susceptibilities of change, exists, of itself, successively, in those various states which constitute the feelings referred to fancy or imagination.

Such is imagination, considered, as it most frequently occurs, without any accompanying desire,—a mode of the general capacity of simple suggestion, and nothing more. But there are, unquestionably, cases in which desire, or intention of some sort, accompanies it during the whole, or the chief part of the process; and it is of these cases chiefly that we are accustomed to think, in speaking of this supposed power. Such is the frame of the mind, in composition of every species, in prose or verse. In this state, conceptions follow each other, and new assemblages are formed. It is a continued exercise of imagination: What, then, is the analysis of our feelings in this state of voluntary thought, when there is a desire of forming new groups of images, and new groups of images arise?

In the first place, to sit down to compose, is to have a general notion of some subject which we are about to treat, with the desire of developing it, and the expectation, or perhaps the confidence, that we shall be able to develop it more or less fully. The desire, like every other vivid feeling, has a degree of permanence which our vivid feelings only possess; and, by its permanence, tends to keep the accompanying conception of the subject, which is the object of the desire.

also permanent before us; and while it is thus permanent, the usual spontaneous suggestions take place,—conception following conception, in rapid but relative series, and our judgment, all the time, approving and rejecting, according to those relations of fitness and unfitness to the subject, which it perceives in the parts of the train.

Such I conceive to be a faithful picture of the state, or successive states of the mind, in the process of composition. It is not the exercise of a single power, but the development of various susceptibilities,—of desire,—of simple suggestion, by which conceptions rise after conceptions,—of judgment or relative suggestion, by which a feeling of relative fitness or unfitness arises, on the contemplation of the conceptions that have thus spontaneously presented themselves. We think of some subject; the thought of this subject induces various conceptions related to it. We approve of some, as having a relation of fitness for our end, and disapprove of others, as unfit. We may term this complex state, or series of states, imagination, or fancy, and the term may be convenient for its brevity. But, in using it, we must not forget that the term, however brief and simple, is still the name of a state that is complex, or of a succession of certain states; that the phenomena comprehended under it, being the same in nature, are not rendered, by this use of a mere word, different from those to which we have already given peculiar names, expressive of them as they exist separately; and that it is to the classes of these elementary phenomena, therefore, that we must refer the whole process of imagination in our philosophic analysis,—unless we exclude analysis altogether, and fill our mental vocabulary with as many names of powers as there are complex affections of the mind.

The feeling of which I have spoken, as most important in fixing our train of thought so as to allow continuous composition, is the vivid feeling of desire, co-existing with the conception of the particular subject; since this conception of the subject, which is essential to the desire itself, must exist as long as the particular desire or intention exists, and, from the influence of the common laws of suggestion, cannot thus continue in the mind without inducing, successively, various other conceptions related to the primary subject, and to each other.

There is another circumstance, however, which contributes very powerfully to keep the train of suggestion steadily related to the particular subject which we wish to consider, or, at least, to recall our thoughts to it, when they have wandered from it so far as to have introduced trains of their own absolutely unconnected with our subject. This is the constant presence of the same objects of perception around us. I remarked to you, when I treated of the secondary laws of suggestion, the important influence which our conceptions have in awaking each other, according as they have been more or less recently combined; even the worst memory being able to repeat a short line of poetry immediately after reading it, though, in a very short time, it might wholly forget it. There is, then, most unquestionably, a peculiar readiness of suggestion of recent images or feelings. Accordingly, when we sit down to compose, the thought of our subject is soon associated with every object around us,—with all that we see,—with every permanent sound,—with the touch of the pen or the pencil which we hold,—with our very tactual and muscular feelings as we sit. All these sensations, indeed, have been frequently connected with other subjects; but they more readily



uggest our present subject, because they have co-  
sisted with it more recently. When, therefore, we  
e led away, almost insensibly, to new trains of  
ought, which might not, of themselves, for a long  
riod, lead us back again to those conceptions which  
upied us, or to the desire which accompanied them,  
are rapidly brought back to these by the sight of  
ne book which meets our eye,—of the desk or table  
ore us,—or by some other of those sensations which  
ave already mentioned. In our efforts of composi-  
n there is a constant action of these causes, some  
hich would lead us away, while others bring us  
ck. The general laws of suggestion would, in many  
es, fill our mind with conceptions foreign to our  
ect, and they do frequently produce this effect ;  
t as often are we recalled by the permanence of our  
ire, or still more frequently by the same laws of  
ggestion which had disturbed and distracted us,  
erating now, in their connexion with the objects of  
se before us, in the way already mentioned, and  
us repairing the very evil to which they had given  
asion.

Such are the means with which nature has provided  
for keeping the trains of our suggestion, not steadily  
ealed, but almost steadily related to one particular  
bject, which we wish to consider, or to illustrate  
nd adorn. Do the conceptions, however, which arise  
uring this period, and which are ascribed to fancy or  
agination, arise by the simple laws of suggestion ?  
are they to be ascribed to the operation of some  
istinct power ?

According to the analysis which I have given you  
f that analysis be faithful—there is no operation  
ny distinct power, but merely the rise of various

images according to the ordinary laws of suggestion, in co-existence with feelings that arise from some other common principles of the mind, particularly desire, and the feeling of relation.

In the creations of our fancy, it is very evident the conceptions which arise must all have some relation to each other, or the new combinations would be wildness and confusion; and to the relations, according to which conceptions may arise, there is some limit. The first line of a poem, if I have previously read the poem, may suggest to me the second line its relation of former contiguity; it may suggest resemblance of thought or language, some similarity of another author; it may suggest, by contrast, of those ludicrous images which constitute parody; it may suggest some image in harmony with its subject, and some appropriate language with which to invest it, as when it suggested to its author the second line, and all the following lines of his poem. In the variety of suggestions, some of which would be called simple conceptions or remembrances, while others would be ascribed to the inventive power of imagination, it is precisely the same principle which operates—that principle of our mental constitution, by which one conception existing, induces, of itself, some other conception relating to it. In the inventive process, indeed, when it is long continued, there is this peculiarity to distinguish it from the suggestions to which we do not give that name, that the process is accompanied with intention, or the desire of producing a new combination, together with the expectation that such a combination will arise, and with judgment, it is termed in science, that discerns the greatest aptness of the means that occur to us, for

end which we have in view; or with taste, which is the name for the particular judgment in the fine arts, that discerns, in like manner, the aptness of the new combinations which arise for producing that end of pleasure which it is our wish to excite. But still the new suggestions or successions of thought, in which all that is truly inventive in the process consists, is nothing more than the operation of that principle of the mind to which memory itself is reducible,—the general tendency of our conceptions to suggest, in certain circumstances, certain other conceptions related to them.

This tendency, as we have already seen, is variously modified in various minds; and, in a former Lecture, I pointed out to you, and illustrated at considerable length, the nature of those peculiar tendencies of suggestion, which distinguish the conceptions of inventive genius from the humbler conceptions of common minds; the mystery of which difference,—that appears so wonderful when we consider only the products of suggestion in the two cases,—we traced to this very simple circumstance, that, in the mind of inventive genius, conceptions follow each other chiefly according to the relations of analogy, which are finite, and admit, therefore, of constant novelty; while in the humbler mind the prevailing tendencies of suggestion are those of former contiguity of objects in place and time, which are, of course, limited, and, by their very nature limited to conceptions that cannot confer, on the mind in which they arise, the honour of originality. In that process of fancy which we have now been considering, it must be remembered, that the splendid creations which it exhibits, when the process is complete, depend on this prevailing direction of the course of thought to analogous objects,



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rather than to such as have been merely proximate in time and place. But we must not conceive that the brilliant wonders, to which this tendency of suggestion gives birth, are to be referred, merely because they are brilliant and wonderful, to some power distinct from that simple suggestion to which they owe their being.

These remarks are, I trust, sufficient to show the nature of that simple and general principle on which the separate suggestions that become permanently embodied in the delightful pictures of fancy, depend. It may be necessary, however, to illustrate, a little more fully, the nature of that selection, of which writers on the subject of imagination so frequently speak.

I have already shown, that in far the greater number of imaginations,—in all those which enliven the momentary reveries that form so large a part of our mental history of each day, though, from the constant recurrence of objects of perception, more vivid and more intimately connected with our permanent desires, they pass away, and are forgotten almost as soon as they have arisen,—in all those visions of the future, which occupy, with their own little hopes and fears, the great multitude of mankind, the combinations of fancy which arise, are far from implying any selection by that mind to which they arise, but occur to it, independently of any choice, by mere suggestion, or by the co-existence and combination of some conception, as it arises, with that remaining perception or conception which suggested it, or with some other remaining conception of a complex group.

The selection, however, which we have to consider, is that which is supposed to take place in cases of



imagination, where there is an undoubted desire of producing some new and splendid result.

"We seem to treat the thoughts that present themselves to the fancy in crowds," it has been said, "as a great man treats those [courtiers] that attend his levee. They are all ambitious of his attention—he goes round the circle, bestowing a bow upon one, a smile upon another, asks a short question of a third, while a fourth is honoured with a particular conference; and the greater part have no particular mark of attention, but go as they came. It is true, he can give no mark of his attention to those who were not there; but he has a sufficient number for making a choice and distinction."<sup>1</sup>

Of this selection I may remark, in the first place, as, indeed, I have already repeatedly remarked,—that, when many images are together in our mind, we cannot combine two of them, with the view of forming a third, because this would be, in truth, to have already formed that third which we are supposed to will to form. In the second place, I may remark, that we cannot, by any direct effort of will, banish from our mind any thought which we may conceive to be incongruous to our subject, so as to retain only such as are congruous. To desire to banish, is, in truth, effectively to retain,—the very desire making the particular thought more vivid than it otherwise would have been.

"We vainly labour to forget  
What by the labour we remember more."

We cannot select any two images, therefore, out of many, with the express design of forming that third which results from them, since the design itself

<sup>1</sup> Reid on the Intellectual Powers, Essay IV. Chap. iv.

would imply their previous combination. We cannot banish a third, fourth, or fifth image, co-existing with these two, from our feeling of their incongruity with the plan already conceived by us, since the wish of banishing them would only give to them a firmer place. We do not truly separate the two images from the group by any direct effort of our will—for our will could have no power of producing the separation; but Nature, by certain principles with which our mind is endowed, forms the separation for us, and consequently, the new assemblage which remains after the separation of the rejected parts. This it does for us, according to the simple theory which I have been led to form of the process, in consequence of our feeling of approbation—the feeling of the congruity of certain images with the plan already conceived by us; for this feeling of approbation, and therefore of increased interest, cannot arise and continue, without rendering more lively the conceptions to which it is attached, producing, in short, a prominence and vividness of these particular conceptions, in consequence of which they outlast the fainter conceptions that co-existed with them. This vivifying influence of our mere approbation, operates very nearly in the same way as, in the process of attention formerly considered by us, we found, that of a multitude of objects, all equally present to our eye, and all producing, or at least capable of producing, an impression of some sort on the sentient mind, the mere feeling of interest, and the consequent desire of further knowledge, rendered some, in a single moment, more prominent than others, as if almost annihilating the others that were equally before our view, but which faded more rapidly from their comparative indistinctness.

The vividness of our mere approbation, then, might

be sufficient of itself to vivify, in some degree, the conceptions with which it harmonizes, as our desire in attention renders more vivid the perceptions to which it directly relates. But it is not merely as approbation that it operates—it operates also indirectly by inducing that very feeling, or combination of feelings, which we term attention; and adding, therefore, all the vivacity which attention gives to the relative and harmonizing image. When a conception arises to the poetic mind that seems peculiarly related to the primary conception of the subject, there is of course an instant approbation of it; and, in consequence of this approbation, an almost instant desire of considering the image more fully, and developing or embodying, in the most powerful language, that beautiful relation which is perceived. There arises, in short, as I have said, that complex feeling of attention, which consists in the union of a certain desire with a certain perception or conception; and when attention is thus excited, it is not wonderful that all the usual consequences of attention should follow, in the increased vividness of the conception to which we attend, and the lessened vividness, and therefore more rapid decay, of the co-existing images that have no relation to our desire.

Of the various images that exist in the mind of the poet, in those efforts of fancy which we term creative, because they exhibit to us results different from any that have been before exhibited to us, he does not, then, banish by his will, because he is not capable of thus directly banishing a single image of the confused group; but he has already some leading conception in his mind; he perceives the relation which certain images of the group bear to this leading conception; and these images instantly becoming more lively, and



therefore more permanent, the others gradually disappear, and leave those beautiful groups which he seems to have brought together by an effort of volition, merely because the simple laws of suggestion that have operated without any control on his part, have brought into his mind a multitude of conceptions, of which he is capable of feeling the relation of fitness or unfitness to his general plan. What is suitable remains—not because he wills it to remain, but because it is rendered more vivid by his approval and intent admiration. What is unsuitable disappears—not because he wills it to disappear—for his will would, in this case, serve only to retain it longer; but simply because it has not attracted his admiration and attention, and therefore fades like every other faint conception. Nature is thus, to him, what she has been in every age, the only true and everlasting muse—the Inspirer—to whom we are indebted as much for everything which is magnificent in human art, as for those glorious models of excellence, which, in the living and inanimate scene of existing things, she has presented to the admiration of the genius which she inspires.

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#### LECTURE XLIII.

*Reduction of certain supposed Faculties to Simple Suggestion.—*

*IV. Habit—Advantages derived from the Accurate Reference of the Phenomena of Suggestion to Laws which operate on the Time of the Suggestion only, in the Refutation of Mechanical Theories of Association—Refutation of Hartley's Theory.*

GENTLEMEN, we were engaged yesterday in considering and analyzing the complex phenomena, usually

referred to a distinct intellectual faculty, which has been termed the Power of Imagination or Fancy; and, particularly, in tracing the most important elements of these complex states, or successions of states of the mind, to that principle of simple suggestion which has been the subject of our late examination.

The various analyses into which we were led, in considering imagination, first, as it occurs without desire, in the short reveries of every hour, and afterwards, as it occurs in combination with desire, in the intentional processes of composition, were too long to admit of minute recapitulation; and, I flatter myself, that you do not need any recapitulation to bring their results, at least, fully before you.

That, in those short reveries which, intermingled as they are with our perceptions of actual things, and often giving their own colours to them, form so much of human happiness, and often too so much of human misery—imagination, the producer of new forms, does not imply any new or peculiar faculty distinguishable from common suggestion, was made, I hope, sufficiently apparent; and I trust you were equally convinced, that, in the longest process of intentional composition, the new combinations that arise to us are as little capable of being directly willed; that they do not imply in us any power of combining by our will various conceptions, or of banishing from our mind, by any effort of our mere will, other conceptions which appear to us inappropriate.

As we cannot will the existence of any group of images, or of any image in a group, since this very will to produce it would imply its actual present existence as an object of our will; so, what we call selection, cannot single from the group an image to the direct exclusion of others, since the operation of

the mere will to exclude any image by rendering it more vivid as an object of our desire, would tend more effectually to retain it. But there are, in that selection of which we speak, a feeling of the relation of certain parts of a complex group, to one leading conception of a particular subject—a consequent approbation of them, as in preference fit for our purpose, and a continued exclusive attention to them; or, in other words, a continued desire of tracing and developing and embodying, in the fittest language, the peculiar relations which these parts of the complex group are felt by us to bear to the plan which we had primarily in view. The common effects, therefore, of attention or desire, take place in this as in every other instance. The particular images to which we attend, become instantly more vivid, and, therefore, more prominent, so as to separate themselves, by their mere permanence, from the fainter conceptions that fade more rapidly; the remaining images, which were all that seemed to us to harmonize in the wider group, thus mingling together, as if we had formed by our very will the direct combination, and excluded by our very will those incongruous parts, which our will, if we had vainly attempted to make the experiment, could have served only to render more vivid, and, therefore, more lasting.

It is thus, without any exertion of faculties different in kind from those which are exercised in the humblest intellectual functions of vulgar life,—by the mere capacity of simple suggestion, which, as long as the conception of any subject, or part of a subject, remains, presents, in accordance with it, image after image, by the capacity of feelings of relation in the perceived fitness or unfitness of certain images for a particular design; by that primary general desire.



which constituted or gave birth to the design itself, and other more particular and subordinate desires, which form the chief elements of the varying process of attention, to the varying images in the train of thought,—all those miracles of human art have arisen, which have not merely immortalized their authors, but which confer a sort of dignity, and a dignity of no slight species, even on those who are capable merely of admiring them, with an admiration that feels their real excellence. Indeed, next to the glory of producing them, and perhaps, not inferior to it in happiness, is the pleasure of being able thus to appreciate and admire.

Simple as the faculties may be, however, which are concerned in the complex process of imagination, to the fancy itself by which these miracles are produced, there are truly no limits: not in external things, for these it can mingle at pleasure; not in the affections of the soul, for these, in its spiritual creations, are as obedient to it as the mere forms of matter; not even in infinity itself, for, after it has conceived one infinity, it can still, in its speculations, add to it another and another, as if what would be impossible in nature were possible to it.

“What wealth in souls,  
That, scorning limit, or from place or time,  
Bold on Creation's confines walk and view  
What was and is, and *more than e'er shall be*,  
Souls that can grasp whate'er the Almighty made,  
And wander wild through things impossible.”

*Young.*

The conceptions which rise and mingle in our living pictures of fancy, being derived, not merely from the various climes of the earth which we inhabit, but from every part of the immensity of the universe, give to

our imagination, if we consider it relatively to the objects of conception, a species of virtual omnipresence, or a rapidity of passage almost as wonderful as omnipresence itself. "Tot virtutes accepimus, tot artes, animum denique," says Seneca, "animum denique, cui nihil non eodem quo intendit momento pervium est, sideribus, velociorem, quorum post multa sæcula futuros cursus antecedit."<sup>1</sup> To the same purpose, but more quaintly, says an ingenious French writer, comparing the velocity of our thought with that of the swiftest of material things:—"Whatever rapidity we may give to light, what is it to that of my imagination? I wish to rise to the planet Saturn, at the distance of three hundred millions of leagues from the earth. *I am there.* I will to ascend still higher, to the region of the fixed stars, at a distance from the earth which is no longer to be counted by millions of leagues, but by millions of millions. I have already passed over all this immensity that intervenes. Would I explore the twelve famous constellations of the Zodiac? The Sun takes twelve months to journey through them. I have already traversed them all, in less time than it would have taken for me to pronounce their names."

"Adde quod in terris nihil est velocius illâ,  
 Et formas subit extemplo quascunque, locosque ;  
 Nunc fera, nunc volueris : nunc priscae mœnia Romæ.  
 Nunc petit Ægyptum viridem, fontesque latentes  
 Ambiguos Nili, et Libyæ deserta peragrat.  
 Abdita nunc terræ ingreditur : nunc proxima Soli  
 Inter et errantes per cœlum volvitur ignes,  
 Et sola æternum videt indefessa Tonantem.  
 Proximaque assequitur, ceptisque audacibus urget.  
 Quoque magis toto diversa a corpore fertur  
 Hoc magis immensas diversa a corpore vires

<sup>1</sup> De Beneficiis, Lib. II. c. xxix.

Explicat, ac victrix membrorum incedit, et ultro  
Evolat ad superos, propriisque enititur alis." <sup>1</sup>

The next class of phenomena to which, as in their chief circumstances, modes of the principles of suggestion, I would direct your attention, are the phenomena of *Habit*.

The effects of habit, are, by Dr Reid, ascribed to a peculiar ultimate principle of the mind; and though I flatter myself, after the discussions which have engaged us, you are not very likely to fall into this error, it may be proper to enter into some fuller illustration and analysis of an influence, which is unquestionably one of the most powerful in our mental constitution.

In treating of the secondary laws of suggestion, I before considered the effect of general habit, if it might so be termed, in modifying the suggestions of mere analogy. The habit which we are now to examine, however, is that in which the effects are not analogous merely, but strictly similar, in a tendency to the repetition of the same actions.

The nature of habit may be considered in two lights; as it thus produces a greater tendency to certain actions, and as it occasions greater facility and excellence in those particular actions.

The first form of its influence, then, which we have to consider, is that by which it renders us more prone to actions that have been frequently repeated.

That the frequent repetition of any action increases the tendency to it, all of you must have experienced in yourselves, in innumerable cases of little importance, perhaps, but sufficiently indicative of the influence; and there are few of you, probably, who have not had an opportunity of remarking in others the fatal power of habits of a very different kind. In the corruption

<sup>1</sup> Heinsius de Contemptu Mortis, Lib. II.



of a great city, it is scarcely possible to look around, without perceiving some warning example of that blasting and deadening influence, before which, everything that was generous and benevolent in the heart has withered, while everything which was noxious has flourished with more rapid maturity; like those plants which can extend their roots, indeed, even in a pure soil, and fling out a few leaves amid balmy airs and odours, but which burst out in all their luxuriance, only from a soil that is fed with constant putrescency, and in an atmosphere which it is poison to inhale. It is not vice,—not cold, and insensible, and contented vice that has never known any better feelings,—which we view with melancholy regret. It is virtue,—at least what once was virtue,—that has yielded progressively and silently to an influence scarcely perceived, till it has become the very thing which it abhorred. Nothing can be more just than the picture of this sad progress described in the well-known lines of Pope:—

“Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,  
As, to be hated, needs but to be seen;  
Yet, seen too oft, familiar with her face,  
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.”<sup>1</sup>

In the slow progress of some insidious disease, which is scarcely regarded by its cheerful and unconscious victim, it is mournful to mark the smile of gaiety as it plays over that very bloom, which is not the freshness of health, but the flushing of approaching mortality,—amid studies, perhaps, just opening into intellectual excellence, and hopes and plans of generous ambition that are never to be fulfilled. But how much more painful is it, to behold that equally insi-

<sup>1</sup> Essay on Man, Ep. II. v. 217-220.

dious and far more desolating progress with which guilty passion steals upon the heart,—when there is still sufficient virtue to feel remorse, and to sigh at the remembrance of purer years, but not sufficient to throw off the guilt, which is felt to be oppressive, and to return to that purity in which it would again, in its bitter moments, gladly take shelter, if only it had energy to vanquish the almost irresistible habits that would tear it back !

“ Crimes lead to greater crimes, and link so straight,  
What first was *accident* at last is *fate* :  
The unhappy servant sinks into a slave,  
And virtue's last sad strugglings cannot save.”

*Mallet.*

We must not conceive, however, that habit is powerful only in strengthening what is *evil*,—though it is this sort of operation which of course forces itself more upon our observation and memory,—like the noontide darkness of the tempest, that is remembered when the calm, and the sunshine, and the gentle shower are forgotten. There can be no question that the same principle which confirms and aggravates what is evil, strengthens and cherishes also what is good. The virtuous, indeed, do not require the influence of habitual benevolence or devotion to force them, as it were, to new acts of kindness to man, or to new sentiments of gratitude to God. But the temptations to which even virtue might sometimes be in danger of yielding, in the commencement of its delightful progress, become powerless, and free from peril, when that progress is more advanced. There are spirits which, even on earth, are elevated above that little scene of mortal ambition with which their benevolent wishes for the sufferers there are the single tie that connects them

still. All with them is serenity; the darkness and the storm are beneath them. They have only to look down, with generous sympathy, on those who have not yet risen so high; and to look up, with gratitude, to that Heaven which is above their head, and which is almost opening to receive them.

To explain the influence of habit, in increasing the tendency to certain actions, I must remark, what I have already more than once repeated, that the suggesting influence, which is usually expressed in the phrase *association of ideas*, though that very improper phrase would seem to limit it to our ideas or conceptions only, and has unquestionably produced a mistaken belief of this partial operation of a general influence,—is not limited to these more than to any other states of the mind, but occurs also with equal force in other feelings, which are not commonly termed ideas or conceptions; that our desires or other emotions, for example, may, like them, form a part of our trains of suggestion; and that it is not more wonderful, therefore, that the states of the mind, which constitute certain desires, after frequently succeeding certain perceptions, should, on the mere renewal of the perceptions, recur once more, than that any one conception should follow, in this manner, any other conception; that the mere picture of a rose, for example, should suggest its fragrance; or that verses which we have frequently read should rise once more successively in our memory, when the line which precedes them has been repeated to us, or remembered by us. To him who has long yielded servilely to habits of intoxication, the mere sight or the mere conception of the poisonous beverage, to which he has devoted and sacrificed his health, and virtue, and happiness, will induce, almost as if me-



chanically, the series of mental affections on which the worse than animal appetite and the muscular motions necessary for gratifying it depend. Perhaps, at the early period of the growth of the passion, there was little love of the wine itself, the desire of which was rather a consequence of the pleasures of gay conversation that accompanied the too frequent draught. But whatever different pleasures may originally have accompanied it, the perception of the wine and the draught itself were frequent parts of the complex process; and, therefore, those particular mental states which constituted the repeated volitions necessary for the particular muscular movements; and it is not wonderful, therefore, that all the parts of the process should be revived by the mere revival of a single part.

What is called the power of habit is thus suggestion, and nothing more. The sight of the wine before him has co-existed innumerable times with the desire of drinking it. The state of mind, therefore, which constitutes the perception, induces, by the common influence of suggestion, that other state of mind which constitutes the desire, and the desire all those other states or motions which have been its usual attendants.

This influence of habit, then, in increasing the tendency to certain motions, is not very difficult of explanation, without the necessity of having recourse to any principle of the mind distinct from that on which all our simple suggestions depend. If feelings tend to induce other feelings, in consequence of former proximity or co-existence, it would, indeed, be most wonderful if habitual tendencies were not produced. But the tendency to certain actions is not merely increased; the action itself, in cases of complicated motion, becomes easier.

In what manner is this increased facility to be explained?

If any of you were to try, for the first time, any one of the wondrous feats of the circus—vaulting, dancing on the rope, or some of the more difficult equestrian exercises—there is very little reason to think that the individual, whatever general vigour and agility he might possess, would be successful; and if he were so singularly fortunate as to perform the feat at all, there can be no doubt that he would perform it with great labour and comparative awkwardness. A certain series of muscular contractions, alone, are best fitted for producing a certain series of attitudes; and though we may all have the muscles necessary for these particular attitudes, and the power of producing in them the requisite contractions, we have not merely from the sight or conception of the particular attitude, a knowledge either of the particular muscles that are to be moved, or of the particular degrees of motion that may be necessary. In our first attempts, accordingly, though we may produce a rude imitation of the motion which we wish to imitate, the imitation must still be a very rude one; because, in our ignorance of the particular muscles and particular quantities of contraction, we contract muscles which ought to have remained at rest, and contract those which ought to be contracted only in a certain degree, in a degree either greater or less than this middle point. By frequent repetition, however, we gradually learn and remedy our mistakes; but we acquire this knowledge very slowly, because we are not acquainted with the particular parts of our muscular frame, and with the particular state of the mind, necessary for producing the motion of a

single muscle separately from the others with which it is combined. The most skilful anatomist, therefore, if he were to venture to make his appearance upon a tight-rope, would be in as great danger of falling as any of the mob (who might gather around him, perhaps, in sufficient time at least to see him fall) would be in his situation; because, though he knows the various muscles of his frame, and even might be capable of foretelling what motions of certain muscles would secure him in his perilous elevation, he yet is unacquainted with the separate states of mind that might instantly produce the desired limited motions of the desired muscles; since these precise states of mind never have been a part of his former consciousness.

But though our command over our separate muscles is not a command which we can exercise with instant skill, and though it is, and must be at all times exercised by us blindly, without any accurate perception of the nice parts of the process that are going on within us at our bidding, we do certainly acquire this gradual skill. In the long series of trials, we find what volitions have produced an effect that resembles most the model which we have in view. At almost every repetition, either some muscle is left at rest, which was uselessly exerted before, or the degree of contraction of the same muscles is brought nearer and nearer to the desired point; till, at length, having found the particular volitions which produce the desired effect, we repeat these frequently together; so that, on the general principles of suggestion, they arise together afterwards with little risk of the interference of any awkward incongruous volition which might disturb them, and destroy the beauty of the graceful movements, that seem now scarcely to re-



quire any effort in the performer, but to be to him what the muscular motions necessary for simple walking or running are to us,—motions that, easy as they now seem to us all, were once learned by us as slowly, and with as many painful failures, as the more difficult species of motions, which constitute their wonderful art, were learned in maturer life by the rope-dancer and the juggler.

The painfulness and labour of our first efforts in such attempts, it must be remembered, do not arise merely from our bringing too many muscles into play, with the view of producing a certain definite effect; but also, in a great measure, from the absolute necessity of bringing more into play than we intended, for the purpose of counteracting and remedying the evil occasioned by former excess of motion. We lose our balance; and, merely in consequence of this loss of exact equilibrium, we are obliged to perform certain other actions, not directly to execute the particular movement originally intended by us, but simply to restore that equilibrium, without which it would be vain for us to attempt to execute it. All this unnecessary labour—which is a mere waste of strength, and a painful waste of it—is, of course, saved to us, when we have made sufficient progress to be able at least to keep our balance; and the desired motion thus becomes easier in two ways, both positively, by our nearer approximation to that exact point of contraction which constitutes the perfect attitude, and negatively, by the exclusion of those motions which our own awkwardness had rendered unavoidable.

We have seen, then, in what manner, in conformity with that great principle of the mind considered by us, the phenomena of our habitual actions may be

explained, both in the increased tendency to such actions, and the increased facility of performing them.

I cannot quit the subject of our suggestions without remarking the advantage which we derive from the accurate reference of these to laws of mind, that operate at the time of the suggestion only, and not to any previous mysterious union of the parts of the train,—in refuting the mechanical theories of association, and of thought and passion in general, which, in some degree in all ages, but especially since the publication of the work of Dr Hartley, have so unfortunately seduced philosophers from the proper province of intellectual analysis, to employ themselves in fanciful comparisons of the affections of matter and mind, and at length to conceive that they had reduced all the phenomena of mind to corpuscular motions. The very use of the term *association* has, unquestionably, in this respect, been of material disadvantage; and the opinion which it seems to involve, of the necessity of some connecting process, prior to suggestion, some co-existence of perceptions, linked, as it were, together by a common tie, has presented so many material analogies, that the mind which adopted it would very naturally become more ready to adopt that general materialism, which converts perception and passion, and the remembrances of these, into states of sensorial particles, more easily produced, as more frequently produced before, in the same manner as a tree bends most readily in the direction in which it has most frequently yielded to the storm. Had the attention been fixed less on the suggestions of grosser contiguity, than on the more refined suggestions of analogy or contrast, or on those which arise from the perception of objects seen for the first time,

the analogy of all the increased flexibilities of matter would have been less apt to occur, or, at least, its influence would have been greatly lessened; and the readers of many of those romances, which call themselves systems of intellectual philosophy, would have viewed, with astonishment, the hypotheses of sensorial motions, and currents of animal spirits, and furrows in the brain, and vibrations, and miniature vibrations, which false views of the mere time of association, in a connecting process of some sort prior to suggestion, have made them, in many cases, too ready to embrace.

It is chiefly in the southern part of the island that the hypothesis of Dr Hartley has met with followers; and his followers have generally been extravagant admirers of his philosophical genius, which I own, seems to me to be very opposite to the genius of sound philosophy. That there is considerable acuteness, however, displayed in his work, and that it contains some successful analyses of complex feelings, I am far from denying; and, as intellectual science consists so much in the analysis of the complex phenomena of thought, its influence, in this respect, has unquestionably been of service, in promoting that spirit of inquiry, which, in a science that presents no attraction to the senses, is so easily laid asleep, or at least so readily acquiesces, as if to justify its indolence, in the authority of great names, and of all that is ancient in error and venerable in absurdity. But, though the influence of his philosophy may have been of service in this respect, the advantage which has perhaps flowed from it in this way must have been inconsiderable compared with the great evil which has unquestionably flowed from it in another way, by leading the inquirer to acquiesce in remote analogies, and to adopt explanations and



arrangements of the phenomena of mind,—not as they agree with the actual phenomena, but as they chance to agree with some supposed phenomena of our material part. Dr Hartley, indeed, does not consider materialism as a necessary consequence of his theory. He does not say that the vibrations and vibratiuncles of the medullary parts of the sensorium constitute the very sensations and passions, but merely that they are changes necessary to every mental affection. Yet, by adopting a supposed analogy of a particular species of motion, as common to all the intellectual functions, and thus imposing the necessity of finding, or attempting to find, in every case, some exact correspondence of the mental phenomena, with the varieties and combinations of this particular species of motion, he has done as much to distract the attention of the intellectual inquirer as if he had made all the phenomena to consist of this particular motion; and, without contending for materialism, or even believing in materialism, has produced this belief in the minds of those who have adopted his general system, as effectually as if he had himself believed and contended that the soul is a cube or a cone, or some irregular solid of many sides.

If we admit—as in sound philosophy it is impossible not to admit—the existence of mind as a substance not cubical, conical, nor of many sides, regular or irregular, but one and simple, different from matter, and capable, by the affections of which it is susceptible, of existing in all those various states which constitute the whole history of our life, as sentient and intelligent, and moral beings, though we must allow that its sense of external things, and perhaps some of its other susceptibilities, require certain previous sensorial changes or affections, not for constituting its feelings,

but merely for giving occasion to them as any other cause gives occasion to any other effect ;—there is no reason for believing that such changes of the material organs are necessary for every feeling or affection of the mind, even as the mere occasions on which the feelings arise. Though we were to admit this necessity, however, without any reason for admitting it, and were to think ourselves obliged, therefore, to have recourse to some analogy of matter, we must still reject the hypothesis of vibrations ; since of all the corporeal changes that could be imagined, in the soft medullary matter of the brain and nerves, vibrations seem the least likely,—certainly, at least, the worst fitted for marking accurately the nice distinctions of things. Indeed, it has always seemed to me peculiarly wonderful that such an hypothesis should have been formed by a physician, to whom the structure of the brain and its appendages must have been familiar. If we wished to have a substance that should damp and deaden every species of vibration, so as to prevent a single vibration from being accurately transmitted, it would not be very easy to find one better suited for this purpose than that soft pulpy matter which is supposed, by Dr Hartley, to transmit, with most exact fidelity, all the nicest divisions of infinitesimal vibrations.

Of the system of vibrations and vibratiuncles, which has now fallen into merited disrepute even with those who are inclined, in other respects, to hold in very high estimation the merits of Hartley, as an intellectual analyst, it is scarcely necessary to offer any serious confutation. The very primary facts of association or suggestion on which the whole of his metaphysical system is founded, have always appeared to me a sufficient confutation of that very hypothesis which is

adduced to explain them ; and as these are his favourite phenomena, on which he constantly insists, they may fairly be taken as the most suitable instances in which to examine the force of the analogy which he wishes to establish. Though the sensorium, then, were allowed to be, in almost every circumstance, the very opposite of what it is—to be finely elastic, and composed of chords adapted in the best possible manner for the nicest differences of vibrations ; and though varieties, in the mere times of vibration of the same strings, were allowed to be sufficient for explaining all the infinite diversities of sensation ; still the influence of that very association on which Hartley founds so much, would remain wholly unexplained. We may suppose, indeed, any two of these chords, from accidental simultaneous impulse, to have vibrated together ; but this can be no reason, even though the accidental concurrence of vibrations should have taken place one thousand times at the same moment, that there should be any greater tendency in the second chord than there was originally, to vibrate, without a repetition of the primary impulse, in consequence of the mere vibration of the first. If the chords, or series of vibratory particles, still retain the same length and tension, the motion of the second may indeed be allowed to be producible indirectly, by an impulse given only to the first, if the strings truly harmonize ; but in this case the motion of the second must have been produced in like manner, originally, by the first vibrations of the other, when external force was applied to it alone ; and, if the two series of vibratory particles be of such a kind as not to harmonize, a thousand accidental co-existences or successions of their vibrations cannot make them harmonize more than at first. Association, therefore, or habit, on such an hypothesis, would not



be necessary to account for phenomena which must have taken place equally by the mere laws of harmonics, without association. If the sight of a pictured rose recall to me its fragrance, or the fragrance of a rose in the dark recall to me its form and colour, it is a proof that the sensorial chords, of which the vibrations give rise to these conceptions, are of such a length, as to harmonize, and to admit, therefore, of joint vibration from a single impulse. But in this case it is surely unnecessary that both the sight and the smell should ever have existed before. Though I had never *seen* a rose, the mere *smell* of one in the dark should have brought before me instantly the form and colour which I never had beheld, because it should instantly have produced this particular corresponding vibration in the harmonizing strings; and though I had never enjoyed its delightful fragrance, the mere picture of the flower on paper or canvass should have given me, in the very instant, by a similar correspondence of vibration, the knowledge of its odour.

All this, it may perhaps be said, would be very true, if the vibrations, of which metaphysical physiologists speak, were meant in their common physical sense. But if they are not used in their common physical sense, what is it that they are intended to denote? and why is not the precise difference pointed out? Nothing can be simpler than the meaning of the term vibration—an alternate approach and retrocession of a series of particles; and if this particular species of motion be not meant, it is certainly most absurd to employ the term, when another term could have been adopted or invented without risk of error; or at least to employ it without stating what is distinctly meant by it, as different from the other vibrations of which we are accustomed to speak. If it be not under-

stood in its usual meaning, and if no other meaning be assigned to the term, the hypothesis, which expresses nothing that can be understood, has not even the scanty glory of being an hypothesis. The same phenomena might, with as much philosophic accuracy, be ascribed to any other fanciful term—to the *Entelecheia* of Aristotle, or to the *Abracadabra* of the *Cabalists*. Indeed, they might be ascribed to either of these magnificent words with greater accuracy, because, though the words might leave us as ignorant as before, they at least would not communicate to us any notion positively false. There is certainly very little resemblance of memory to an effervescence; yet we might theorize as justly in ascribing memory to an effervescence as to a vibration, if we be allowed to understand both terms in a sense totally different from the common use, without even expressing what that different sense is; and if the followers of Hartley, in preferring vibratiuncles to little effervescences, profess to understand the term vibration as it is commonly understood, and to apply to the phenomena of association the common laws of vibrating chords, they must previously undertake to show that the phenomena of musical chords, on which they found their hypothesis, are the reverse of what they are known to be,—that strings of such a length and tension as to harmonize, are not originally capable of receiving vibrations from the motions of each other, but communicate their vibrations mutually only after they have repeatedly been touched together,—and that musical chords, of such a length and tension as to be absolutely discordant, acquire notwithstanding, when frequently touched with a bow or the finger, a tendency to harmonize, and at length vibrate together at the mere touch of one of them. Then, indeed, when the tendencies to

vibratory motion are shown to be precisely the reverse of what they are, the phenomena of suggestion might find some analogy in the phenomena of vibration; but, knowing what we know of musical chords, it is impossible to bring their phenomena to bear, in the slightest degree, on the phenomena of association, unless, indeed, by convincing us that, little as we know positively of the mysterious principle of suggestion, we may at least negatively have perfect knowledge that it is not a vibration or a vibratiuncle.

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#### LECTURE XLIV.

*On the Influence of particular Suggestions on the Intellectual and Moral Character.*

GENTLEMEN, having now endeavoured to lay before you, and explain, as far as the limited nature of these Lectures allows, the general phenomena which flow from the principle of simple Suggestion, I shall conclude this part of my Course with some remarks on the Influence of Particular Associations on the Intellectual and Moral Character. The speculation, if we had leisure to enter upon it fully, would be one of the most extensive and interesting in the whole field of philosophic inquiry. But so many other subjects demand our attention, that a few slight notices are all which my limits at present permit.

In these remarks I use the familiar term *associations* for its convenient brevity, as expressive of the suggestions that arise from former co-existence or successions of feelings, with perfect confidence that you can no longer be in any danger of attaching to it erroneous notions, as if it implied some mysterious process



of union of the feelings suggesting and suggested, or any other influence than that which, at the moment of suggestion, certain feelings have as relative, (our proximate feelings among the rest.) to suggest other correlative feelings.

In this tendency to mutual suggestion, which arises from the relation of former proximity, there is not a single perception, or thought, or emotion of man, and consequently not an object around him, that is capable of acting on his senses, which may not have influence on the whole future character of his mind, by modifying, for ever after, in some greater or less degree, those complex feelings of good and evil, by which his passions are excited or animated, and those complex opinions of another sort, which his understanding may rashly form from partial views of the moment, or adopt as rashly from others, without examination. The influence is a most powerful one, in all its varieties, and is unquestionably not the less powerful, when it operates, for being in most cases altogether unsuspected. It has been attempted to reduce to classes the sources of our various prejudices, those idols of the tribe and of the cave, and of the forum, and of the theatre, as Lord Bacon has quaintly characterised them. But, since every event that befalls us may add, to the circumstances which accidentally accompany it, some permanent impression of pleasure or pain, of satisfaction or disgust, it must never be forgotten that the enumeration of the prejudices, even of a single individual, must, if it be accurate, comprehend the whole history of his life, and that the enumeration of the sources of prejudice in mankind, must be, like the celebrated work of an ancient naturalist, as various as nature herself, "*tam varium quam natura ipsa.*" It is not on their truth

alone, that even the justest opinions have depended for their support ; for even truth itself may, relatively to the individual, and is, relatively to all, in infancy, and to the greater number of mankind for life, a prejudice into which they are seduced by affection or example, precisely in the same way as, on so many other occasions, they are seduced into error. Could we look back upon the history of our mind, it would be necessary, in estimating the influence of an opinion, to consider as often the lips from which it fell, as the certainty of the opinion itself, or perhaps even to take into account some accidental circumstance of pleasure or good fortune which dispelled for a moment our usual obstinacy. We may have reasoned justly on a particular subject for life, because, at some happy moment,

“ Perhaps Prosperity becalm'd our <sup>1</sup> breast ;  
Perhaps the wind just shifted from the East.”<sup>2</sup>

I have already alluded to the influence of professional habits, in modifying the train of thought ; and the observation of the still greater influence, which they exercise, in attaching undue importance to particular sets of opinions, is probably as ancient as the division of professions. The sciences may, in like manner, be considered as speculative professions ; and the exclusive student of any one of these is liable to a similar undue preference of that particular department of philosophy which afforded the truths that astonished and delighted him in his entrance on the study, or raised him afterwards to distinction by discoveries of his own. We know our own internal enjoyments, but we have no mode of discovering the internal enjoyments of others ; and a study, therefore.

<sup>1</sup> His—Orig.

<sup>2</sup> Pope's Moral Essays, Ep. II.

on which we have never entered, unless its ultimate utility be very apparent, presents to our imagination only the difficulties that are to oppose us, which are always more immediately obvious to our thought than the pleasure to which these very difficulties give rise. But the remembrance of our own past studies is the remembrance of many hours of delight; and even the difficulties which it brings before us are difficulties overcome. The mere determination of the mind, therefore, in early youth, to a particular profession or speculative science—though it may have arisen from accidental circumstances, or parental persuasion only, and not in the slightest degree from any preference or impulse of genius at the time, is thus sufficient, by the elements which it cannot fail to mingle in all our complex conceptions and desires, to impress for ever after the intellectual character, and to bend it, perhaps, from that opposite direction into which it would naturally have turned. It has been said, that Heaven, which gave great qualities only to a small number of its favourites, gave vanity to all, as a full compensation; and the proud and exclusive preference which attends any science or profession, hurtful as it certainly is, in preventing just views, and impeding general acquirements, has at least the advantage of serving, in some measure, like this universal vanity, to comfort for the loss of that wider knowledge, which, in far the greater number of cases, must be altogether beyond attainment. The geometer who, on returning a tragedy of Racine, which he had been requested to read, and which he had perused accordingly with most faithful labour, asked, with astonishment, what it was intended to demonstrate? and the arithmetician who, during the performance of Garrick, in one of his most pathetic characters, em-





headed erudition bend before it, and to astonish at least all those on whom it did not impose.

The illustrious French naturalist Adanson, was in very early life distinguished by his proficiency in classical studies. In his first years at college, he obtained the highest prizes in Greek and Latin poetry, on which occasion he was presented with the works of Pliny and Aristotle. The interest which such a circumstance could not fail to give to the works of these ancient inquirers into nature, led him to pay so much attention to the subjects of which they treated, that when he was scarcely thirteen years of age, he wrote some valuable notes, on the volumes that had been given to reward his studies of a different kind.

Vaucanson, the celebrated mechanician,—who, in everything which did not relate to his art, showed so much stupidity, that it has been said of him, that he was as much a machine as any of the machines which he made,—happened, when a boy, to be long and frequently shut up in a room, in which there was nothing but a clock, which, therefore, as the only object of amusement, he occupied himself with examining, so as at last to discover the connexion and uses of its parts; and the construction of machines was afterwards his constant delight and occupation. I might refer to the biography of many other eminent men, for multitudes of similar incidents, that appear to correspond with an exactness more than accidental, with the striking peculiarities of character afterwards displayed by them; and it is not easy to say, if we could trace the progress of genius from its first impressions, how very few circumstances of little apparent moment might have been sufficient,—by the new suggestions to which they would have given rise, and the new complex feelings produced,—to change the general

## THE INFLUENCE OF PARTICULAR SUGGESTIONS

Let us now return afterwards to mark it with its proper character.

It will suffice if the advantages of scientific and artistic education must philosophically, be considered as accidental circumstances. we have, in the contrast between which these advantages of mere culture stand to nature, as contrasted with the powers and the sentiment in the mass of mankind, a striking example to illustrate the influence of circumstances is the influence of those magnificent suggestions which give to genius its glory and its very name.

Our associations and consequent complex feelings, which we derive from the accidental impression of external things or which we form to ourselves by our habits of studies and occupations, have a powerful influence on our intellectual character, those which are transmitted to us from other minds are not less powerful. We continue to think and feel as our ancestors have thought and felt: so true, in innumerable instances, is the observation, that "men make up their principles of inheritance, and defend them as they would their estates, because they are born heirs of them." It has been justly said, that it is difficult to regret, that is an evil which has been long done, and that there are many great and excellent things, which we never think of doing, merely because no one has done them before us. This subjection of the soul to former usage, till roused by circumstances of more than common energy, is like the *inertia* that retains bodies in the state in which they happen to be, till some foreign force operate to suspend their motion or their rest. And it is well, upon the whole, that in the great concerns of life,—those which relate, not to speculative science, but to the direct happiness of nations,—this intellectual inertia subsists. The diff-



culty of moving the multitude, though it may often be the unfortunate cause of preventing benefits which they might readily receive, still has the important advantage of allowing time for reflection, before their force, which is equally irresistible for their self-destruction as for their preservation, could be turned to operate greatly to their own prejudice. The restless passions of the individual innovator, *man*, thus find an adequate check in the general principles of mankind. The same power who has balanced the causes of action and repose in the material world, has mingled them, with equal skill, in the intellectual; and, in the one as much as in the other, the very irregularities that seem, at first sight, to lead to the destruction of that beautiful system of which they are a part, are found to have in themselves the cause that leads them again, from apparent confusion, into harmony and order.

But though, in affairs which concern immediately the peace and happiness of society, it is of importance, that there should be, in those who lead, and still more in those who follow, some considerable obstinacy of attachment to ancient usage, this does not apply to the speculative sciences, in which error does not extend in its consequences beyond the self-illusion of those who embrace it. Yet the history of science, for a long series of ages,—if the science of those ages can be said to afford a subject of history,—exhibits a devotion to ancient opinion more obstinately zealous than that which marks the contemporary narrative of domestic usages or political events. To improve, in some respects, the happiness of a nation, though it was indeed a difficult, and perilous, and rare attempt, was not absolutely impious. But what a spectacle of more hopeless slavery is presented to us in those

long ages of the despotism of authority, when Aristotle was everything, and reason nothing, and when the crime of daring to be wiser, was the worst species of treason, and almost of impiety; though it must be owned, that this rebellion against the right divine of authority, was not a guilt of very frequent occurrence.

“ With ensigns wide unfurl’d  
She rode, triumphant, o’er the vanquish’d world.  
Fierce nations own’d her unresisted might;  
And all was ignorance, and all was night.”

It is at least as melancholy as it is ludicrous to read the decree which was passed, so late as the year 1624, by the Parliament of Paris, in favour of the doctrines of Aristotle, in consequence of the rashness of three unfortunate philosophers, who were accused of having ventured on certain theses, that implied a want of due respect for his sovereign infallibility. In this, all persons were prohibited, under pain of death, (*à peine de la vie,*) from holding or teaching any maxim against the ancient and approved authors, (*contre les anciens auteurs et approuvés.*) In this truly memorable edict, the Parliament seem to have taken for their model the *letters patent*, as they were termed, which, about a centry before, had been issued against Peter Ramus, by Francis the First, a sovereign who, for the patronage which he gave to literature, obtained the name of *protector of letters*; but who, as has been truly said, was far from being the *protector of reason*. Yet this proclamation, which condemns the writings of Ramus for the enormous guilt of an attempted improvement in dialectics, and which prohibits him, “under pain of corporal punishment, from uttering any more slanderous invectives against Aristotle, and other ancient authors received and approv-

ed," professes, in its preamble, to have been issued by the monarch from his great desire for the progress of science and sound literature in France. "This philosophy of Aristotle, so dear to our kings, and to our ancient parliaments," says D'Alembert, "did not always enjoy the same gracious favour with them, even in times of superstition and ignorance. It is true, that the reasons for which it was sometimes proscribed were very worthy of the period. In the early part of the thirteenth century, the works of this philosopher were burnt at Paris, and prohibited, under pain of excommunication, from being read or preserved, 'because they gave occasion to new heresies.' It thus appears," he continues, "that there is really no sort of folly into which the philosophy of Aristotle has not led our good ancestors."

Such is the sway of long-established veneration over our judgment, even in the province of severer science. The influence which the authority of antiquity exercises over our taste is not less remarkable. "What beauty," it has been said, "would not think herself happy, if she could inspire her lover with a passion as lively and tender as that with which an ancient Greek or Roman inspires his respectful commentator?" We laugh at the absurdity of Dacier, one of those most adoring commentators, who, in comparing the excellence of Homer and Virgil, could seriously say, that the poetry of the one was a thousand years more beautiful than the poetry of the other; and yet, in the judgments which we are in the habit of forming, or, at least, of passively adopting, there is often no small portion of this chronological estimation. The prejudice for antiquity is itself very ancient, says La Motte; and it is amusing, at the distance of so many hundred years, to find the same complaint, of undue



partiality to the writers of other ages, brought forward against their contemporaries by those authors, whom we are now disposed to consider as too highly estimated by our own contemporaries on that very account.

How many are there, who willingly join in expressing veneration for works, which they would think it a heavy burthen to read from beginning to end! Indeed, this very circumstance, when the fame of an author has been well established, rather adds to his reputation than diminishes it; because the languor of a work, of course, cannot be felt by those who never take the trouble of perusing it, and its imperfections are not criticised, as they otherwise would be, because they must be remarked before they can be pointed out, while the more striking beauties, which have become traditionary in quotation, are continually presented to the mind. There is much truth, therefore, in the principle, whatever injustice there may be in the application, of the sarcasm of Voltaire, on the Italian poet Dante, that "his reputation will now continually be growing greater and greater, because there is now nobody who reads him."

It is not merely the prejudice of authority, however, which leads our taste to form disproportionate judgments. It is governed by the same accidental associations of every kind, of which I have already spoken, as giving a specific direction to genius. It is not easy to say, how much the simple tale and ballad of our infancy, or innumerable other circumstances still less important of our early life, may have tended to modify our general sense of the beautiful, as it is displayed even in the most splendid of those works of genius which fix our maturer admiration. But as this part of my subject is again to come before us, I shall not dwell on it any longer at present.

It is not in particular details, however, like those which have been now submitted to you, that the influence of association on the intellectual character is best displayed. It is in taking the aggregate of all the circumstances, physical and moral, in the climate, and manners, and institutions of a people.

“There Industry and Gain their vigils keep  
Command the winds, and tame the unwilling deep ;  
Here Force, and hardy deeds of blood prevail ;  
There languid Pleasure sighs in every gale.”<sup>1</sup>

The character and turn of thought, which we attach, in imagination, to the satrap of a Persian court, to a citizen of Athens, and to a rude inhabitant of ancient Sarmatia, are as distinct as the names which we affix to their countries. I need not enter into the detail of circumstances which may be supposed to have concurred in the production of each of these distinct characters. It will be sufficient to take the Athenian for an example, and to think of the circumstances in which he was placed. I borrow a description of these from an eloquent French writer.

“Among the Greeks, wherever the eyes were cast, there monuments of glory were to be found. The streets, the temples, the galleries, the porticos, all gave lessons to the citizens. Everywhere the people recognised the images of its great men ; and, beneath the purest sky, in the most beautiful fields, amid groves and sacred forests, and the most brilliant festivals of a splendid religion—surrounded with a crowd of artists, and orators, and poets, who all painted, or modelled, or celebrated, or sang their compatriot heroes,—marching as it were to the enchanting sounds of poetry and music, that were animated with the same

<sup>1</sup> Gray on the Alliance of Education and Government, v. 42-45.

spirit,—the Greeks, victorious and free, saw, and felt, and breathed nothing but the intoxication of glory and immortality.”<sup>1</sup>

“Hence flourish’d Greece, and hence a race of men  
As gods by conscious future times adored;  
In whom each virtue wore a smiling air,  
Each science shed o’er life a friendly light,  
Each art was nature.”<sup>2</sup>

How admirably does the eloquent writer, from whom I have just quoted, express the peculiar effect of a popular constitution, in giving animation to the efforts of the orator;—and if oratory were all which rendered a people happy, and not rather those equal laws, and that calm security, which render oratory almost useless, how enviable would be that state of manners which he pictures!

“In the ancient republics,” he observes, “eloquence made a part of the constitution. It was it which enacted and abolished laws, which ordered war, which caused armies to march, which led on the citizens to fields of battle, and consecrated their ashes, when they perished in the combat. It was it which from the tribune kept watch against tyrants, and brought from afar, to the ears of the citizens, the sound of the chains which were menacing them. In republics, eloquence was a sort of spectacle. Whole days were spent by the people, in listening to their orators,—as if the necessity of feeling some emotion were an appetite of their very nature. The republican orator, therefore, was not a mere measurer of words, for the amusement of a circle, or a small society. He was a man to whom Nature had given an inevitable empire. He was the defender of a nation,—its sovereign,—its master. It was he who made the enemies of his

<sup>1</sup> Thomas.

<sup>2</sup> Thomson’s *Liberty*, Part II. v. 175-179.



country tremble. Philip, who could not subdue Greece as long as Demosthenes breathed,—Philip, who at Cheronea had conquered an army of Athenians, but who had not conquered Athens, while Demosthenes was one of its citizens—that this Demosthenes, so terrible to him, might be given up, offered a city in exchange. He gave twenty thousand of his subjects, to purchase such an enemy.”

“Oratori clamore plausuque opus est, et velut quodam theatro; qualia quotidie antiquis oratoribus contingebant; cum tot pariter ac tam nobiliter forum coartârint; cum clientelæ quoque, et tribus, et municipiorum legationes, ac partes Italiæ, periclitantibus assisterent; cum, in plerisque judiciis crederet populus Romanus, sua interesse, quod judicaretur.”

In situations like these, who can doubt of the powerful influence which the concurrence of so many vivid perceptions and emotions must have had in directing the associations, and, in a great measure, the whole intellectual and moral character, of the young minds that witnessed and partook of this general enthusiasm?—an enthusiasm that never can be felt in those happier constitutions, in which the fortunes of individuals, and the tranquillity and the very existence of a state, are not left to the caprice of momentary passion. “Nec tanti Reipublicæ Gracchorum eloquentia fuit, ut pateretur et leges.”

Of the influence of association on the moral character of man, the whole history of our race, when we compare the vices and virtues of ages and nations with each other, is but one continued though varied display. We speak of the prevailing manners and dispositions, not merely of savage and civilized life in their extremes, but of progressive stages of barbarism and civilisation,

with terms of distinction almost as clear and definite as when we speak of the changes which youth and age produce in the same individual. Not that we believe men in these different stages of society to be born with different natural propensities, which expand themselves into the diversities afterwards observed, but because there appears to us to be a sufficient source of all these diversities in the circumstances in which man is placed—in the elementary ideas and feelings which opposite states of society afford, for those intimate, and perhaps indissoluble complexities of thought and passion, that are begun in infancy, and continually multiplied in the progress of life. To bring together, in one spectacle, the inhabitants of the wild, of the rude village, and of the populous city, would be to present so many living monuments of the dominion of that principle which has been the subject of our investigation.

When we descend, from the diversities of national character, to the details of private life, we find the elements of the power which produced those great results. It has been said that the example which it is most easy to follow, is that of happiness; and the happiness which is constantly before us is that to which our early wishes may be expected to turn. We readily acquire, therefore, the desires and passions of those who surround us from our birth; because we consider that as happiness which they considered as happiness. There may be vice in this indeed, and vice, which, in other circumstances, we should readily have perceived; but it is the vice of those who have relieved our earliest wants, and whose caresses and soothing, long before we were able to make any nice discriminations, have produced that feeling of love which commends to us everything that forms a part

of the unanalysed remembrance of our parents and friends. Even in more advanced life, it is not easy to love a guilty person, and to feel the same abhorrence of guilt; though vice and virtue have been previously distinguished in our thought with accuracy; and therefore, in periods of savage or dissolute manners, and at an age when the ideas of virtue and vice are obscure, and no analysis has yet been made of complex emotions, it is not wonderful that the child, whose parents are, perhaps, his only objects of love, should resemble them still more in disposition than in countenance.

“ Here vice begins then : At the gate of life,—  
Ere the young multitude to diverse roads  
Part, like fond pilgrims on a journey unknown,  
Sits Fancy, deep enchantress ; and to each,  
With kind maternal looks, presents her bowl,  
A potent beverage. Heedless they comply :  
Till the whole soul, from that mysterious draught  
Is tinged, and every transient thought imbibes  
Of gladness or disgust, desire or fear,  
One home-bred colour.”<sup>1</sup>

It would, indeed, be too much to say, that the virtues of their offspring are comprehended in the virtues of the parents, as the embryo blossom in the seed from which it is to spring; but, at least, it may be truly said, that the parental virtues are not more a source of happiness to the child than they are a source of moral inspiration; and that the most heroic benevolence of him, to whose glory every voice is joining in homage, may often be nothing more than the development of that humbler virtue which smiled upon his infancy, and which listens to the praise with a joy

<sup>1</sup> Pleasures of Imagination, second form of the Poem, Book II.  
v. 445-454.



## 2. INFLUENCE OF PARTICULAR SUGGESTIONS

It is altogether unconscious of the merit which it possesses, and the passion of ambition begins to operate, and the individual which we are considering acquires more energy. Each individual is then governed chiefly by his own associations, but by the associations of the individuals surrounding him, and these may be transferred, as it were, to his breast. He is suggested, and he seeks that species of honour which is to make him honourable in their eyes. He is guided therefore, by views of good, which would have produced gradual growth in the nation, of circumstances which perhaps never have affected him, and he acts accordingly, not as he would have acted, but as is the fashion of the time to act. The influence of the circumstances which, among the various causes of a city, are reckoned glorious or disgraceful, he is to know, with almost accurate precision, and the character of the generation is to be his guide. If it were not for those influences, the various manners, produced by the various technical events, or the energies of the human mind; though, even then, the mind is constantly changing its direction, is far less powerful in its efficacy. More than half the progress of manners in the time of Louis XIV. was produced by the same passion, which, in the case of Charles, produced, perhaps, an excessive and an insupportable and general propagation of vicious and disgraceful reign. A very great number of them have become fashionable, and more than a man of ordinary talents would profess or practise: and the progress of science has done in the world has not been so great, but the progress which it has produced.

ced of the appearances of morality, as from the opportunity which it has afforded to the profligate of fixing that name on the real sanctity of virtue and religion, and of thus terrifying the inconsiderate into a display of vices which otherwise they would have hated, and blushed to embrace.

What irresistible effect in the rejection of opinions, has been produced by the terms of contempt that have been affixed to them, sometimes from accidental circumstances, and still more frequently from intentional malice, and which have continued ever after to associate with the opinions an ignominy which did not belong to them ! The most powerful of all persecution has often been, not the axe and the faggot, but the mere invention of a name. To this sort of persecution all our passions lend themselves readily, because, though we may be quite unable to understand the distinctions which have given rise to opposite names, and though often there may be no real distinction beyond the name itself, we are all capable of understanding that a name which does not include our own sect or party, implies an opposition to us of some kind or other ; and we have all vanity enough to feel such a difference of sentiment—though it may be on subjects which neither we nor our opponents comprehend—to be an implied accusation of error, and therefore an insult to the dignity of our own opinion. In the history of ecclesiastical and civil affairs, what crowds of heretics and political partisans do we find whom a change of a few letters of the alphabet would have converted into friends, or have reversed their animosities ; and many Homooousians and Homoiousians, and Tories and Whigs have reciprocally hated each other, who, but for the inven-

tion of the names, would never have known that they differed!

It would be but a small evil if the vices of the great were confined to that splendid circle which they fill. But how difficult is it for those who are dazzled with that splendour, and who associate it with everything which it surrounds, to think that the vices of the great are vices:—

“ The broad corruptive plague  
Breathes from the city to the farthest hut,  
That sits serene within the forest shade. ”

“ The obscure citizen,” says Massillon, “ in imitating the licentiousness of the great, thinks that he stamps on his passions the seal of dignity and nobility; and thus vanity alone is sufficient to perpetuate disorder, which, of itself, would soon have passed away in weariness and disgust. Those who live far from you,” says that eloquent prelate, addressing the great,—“ those who live in the remotest provinces, preserve at least some remains of their ancient simplicity. They live in happy ignorance of the greater number of those abuses which your example has converted into laws. But the nearer the country approaches you, the more does morality suffer; innocence grows less pure, excesses more common; and the mere knowledge of your manners and usages is thus the chief crime of which the people can be guilty.”

The Stoics, who were sufficiently aware of the influence of this principle on our moral character, seem, if I rightly understand many parts of their works, particularly those of Marcus Aurelius, to have supposed that we have the power of managing the combinations of our ideas with each other, in some measure at our will, and of thus indirectly guiding our



subsequent moral preferences. It is this, I conceive, which forms that *χρῆσις οἷα δεῖ φαντασιῶν*, on which they found so much for the regulation of our lives. But, in whatever mode the regulation of these *φαντασίαι* may take place, it is evident that the sway which they exercise is one of no limited extent:—

“ For Action treads the path  
In which Opinion says, he follows good,  
Or flies from evil ; and Opinion gives  
Report of good or evil, as the scene  
Was drawn by Fancy, lovely or deform'd.  
Is there a man, who, at the sound of death,  
Sees ghastly shapes of terrors, conjured up  
And black before him ;—nought but death-bed groans  
And fearful prayers, and plunging from the brink  
Of light and being down the gloomy air  
An unknown depth ?—Alas ! in such a mind,  
If no bright forms of excellence attend  
The image of his country ;—nor the pomp  
Of sacred senates, nor the guardian voice  
Of Justice on her throne, nor aught that wakes  
The conscious bosom with a patriot's flame,—  
What hand can snatch the dreamer from the toils <sup>1</sup>  
Which Fancy and Opinion thus conspire  
To twine around his heart ?—Or who shall hush  
Their clamour, when they tell him, that to die  
To risk those horrors is a direr curse,  
Than basest life can bring ?—Though Love, with prayers  
Most tender, with Affliction's sacred tears,  
Beseech his aid,—though Gratitude and Faith  
Condemn each step which loiters ;—yet let none  
Make answer for him, that, if any frown  
Of danger thwart his path, he will not stay  
Content,—and be a wretch to be secure.”<sup>2</sup>

In the remarks which have now been made on the

<sup>1</sup> Then what hand

Can snatch this dreamer from the fatal toils.—Orig.

<sup>2</sup> Pleasures of Imagination, Book III. v. 23-27, v. 31-41 ; and second form of the Poem, Book II. v. 432-444.

influence of peculiar directions of the suggesting principle on the moral and intellectual character, we have seen it, in many instances, producing an effect decidedly injurious. But that power which in some cases combines false and discordant ideas, so as to pervert the judgment and corrupt the heart, is not less ready to form associations of a nobler kind; and it is consolatory to think, that, as error is transient, and truth everlasting, a provision is made, in this principle of our nature, for that progress in wisdom and virtue which is the splendid destiny of our race. There is an education of man continually going forward in the whole system of things around him; and what is commonly termed *education*, is nothing more than the art of skilfully guiding this natural progress, so as to form the intellectual and moral combinations in which wisdom and virtue consist. The influence of this, indeed, may seem to perish with the individual; but when the world is deprived of those who have shed on it a glory as they have journeyed along it in their path to heaven, it does not lose all with which they have adorned and blessed it. Their wisdom, as it spreads from age to age, may be continually awakening some genius that would have slumbered but for them, and thus indirectly opening discoveries that, but for them, never would have been revealed to man; their virtue, by the moral influence which it has gradually propagated from breast to breast, may still continue to relieve misery, and confer happiness, when generations after generations shall, like themselves, have passed away.



## LECTURE XLV.

*On the Phenomena of Relative Suggestion.—Arrangement of them under the two orders of Co-existence and Succession.—Species of Feelings belonging to the First Order.*

IN treating of our intellectual states of mind in general, as one great division of the class of its internal affections, which arise, without the necessary presence of any external cause, from certain previous states or affections of the mind itself, I subdivided this very important tribe of our feelings into two orders, those of simple suggestion, and of relative suggestion; the one comprehending all our conceptions and other feelings of the past, the other all our feelings of relation. I have already discussed, as fully as our narrow limits will admit, the former of these orders—pointing out to you, at the same time, the inaccuracy or imperfection of the analyses which have led philosophers to rank, under distinct intellectual powers, phenomena that appear, on minuter analysis, not to differ in any respect from the common phenomena of simple suggestion. After this full discussion of one order of our intellectual states of mind, I now proceed to the consideration of the order which remains.

Of the feelings which arise without any direct external cause, and which I have, therefore, denominated internal states or affections of the mind—there are many then, as we have seen, which arise simply in succession, in the floating imagery of our thought, without involving any notion of the relation of the preceding objects, or feelings, to each other. These, already considered by us, are what I have termed the phenomena of simple suggestion. But there is an extensive



...the nature of re-  
 ...the mere percep-  
 ...these feelings of  
 ...the previous  
 ...I have given the  
 ...by this term  
 ...in *german*.  
 ...comparison seems  
 ...from necessary  
 ...what  
 ...evaluations by  
 ...the term judgment  
 ...to service the  
 ...in general; and if  
 ...to the  
 ...can ex-  
 ...the series of  
 ...since these  
 ...the same the  
 ...single proposition  
 ...that external  
 ...the mind the  
 ...of se-  
 ...I term a sub-  
 ...samples with  
 ...whether any  
 ...feelings of  
 ...which people  
 ...particular theory  
 ...from being I  
 ...the least little  
 ...it is so  
 ...phrasing  
 of science.

That the feelings of emotion are states of mind

essentially different from our simple perceptions, or conceptions of the objects that seem to us related, or from the combinations which we form of these, in the complex groupings of our fancy; in short, that they are not what Condillac terms *transformed sensations*, I proved in a former Lecture, when I combated the excessive simplification of that ingenious, but not very accurate philosopher. There is an original tendency or susceptibility of the mind by which, on perceiving together different objects, we are instantly, without the intervention of any other mental process, sensible of their relation in certain respects, as truly as there is an original tendency or susceptibility of the mind by which, when external objects are present, and have produced a certain affection of our sensorial organ, we are instantly affected with the primary elementary feelings of perception; and, I may add, that, as our sensations or perceptions are of various species, so are there various species of relations;—the number of relations, indeed, even of external things, being almost infinite, while the number of perceptions is, necessarily, limited by that of the objects which have the power of producing some affection of our organs of sensation.

The more numerous these relations may be, however, the more necessary does some arrangement of them become. Let us now proceed, then, to the consideration of some order, according to which their varieties may be arranged.

In my Lectures on the objects of physical inquiry, in the early part of the Course, I illustrated very fully the division which I made of these objects, as relating to space and time; or, in other words, as co-existing or successive; our inquiry, in the one case, having regard to the elementary composition of external things; in

the other case, to their sequences, as causes and effects; and in mind, in like manner, having regard, in the one case, to the analysis of our complex feelings; in the other, to the mere order of succession of our feelings of every kind, considered as mental phenomena. The same great line of distinction appears to me to be the most precise which can be employed in classing our relations. They are the relations either of external objects, or of the feelings of our mind, considered without reference to time, as co-existing; or considered, with reference to time, as successive. To take an example of each kind: I feel that the one half of four is to twelve, as twelve to seventy-two; and I feel this, merely by considering the numbers together, without any regard to time. No notion of change or succession is involved in it. The relation was and is, and will for ever be the same, as often as the numbers may be distinctly conceived and compared. I think of summer—I consider the warmth of its sky, and the profusion of flowers that seem crowding to the surface of the earth, as if hastening to meet and enjoy the temporary sunshine. I think of the cold of winter, and of our flowerless fields and frozen rivulets; and the warmth and the cold of the different seasons I regard as the causes of the different appearances. In this case, as in the former, I feel a relation; but it is a relation of antecedence and consequence, to which the notion of time or change, or succession, is so essential, that without it the relation could not be felt.

It is not wonderful, indeed, that the classes of relations should be found to correspond with the objects of physical inquiry; since the results of all physical inquiry must consist in the knowledge of these relations. To see many objects,—or I may say even—



to see all the objects in nature, and all the elements of every object—and to remember these distinctly as individuals, without regard to their mutual relations, either in space or time—would not be to have science. To have what can be called science is to know these objects, as co-existing in space, or as successive in time,—as involving certain proportions, or proximities, or resemblances, or certain aptitudes to precede or follow. Without that susceptibility of the mind, by which it has the feeling of relation, our consciousness would be as truly limited to a single point, as our body would become, were it possible to fetter it to a single atom. The feeling of the present moment would be everything; and all beside, from the infinitely great to the infinitely little, would be as nothing. We could not know the existence of our Creator; for it is by reasoning from effects to causes, that is to say, by the feeling of the relation of antecedence and consequence, that we discover his existence, as the great cause or antecedent of all the wonders of the universe. We could not know the existence of the universe itself; for it is, as I have shown, by the consideration of certain successions of our feelings only, that we believe things to be external, and independent of our mind. We could not, even in memory, know the existence of our own mind, as the subject of our various feelings; for this very knowledge implies the relation of these transient feelings to one permanent subject. We might still have had a variety of momentary feelings, indeed, but this would have been all; and, though we should have differed from them in our capacity of pleasure and pain, we should scarcely have been raised, in intellectual and moral dignity, above the organized beings around us, of a different class, that rise from the earth in spring, to flourish in

summer, and wither at the close of autumn, and whose life is a brief chronicle of the still briefer seasons in which they rise, and flourish, and fade.

The relations of phenomena may, as I have already said, be reduced to two orders—those of co-existence and succession;—the former of which orders is to be considered by us in the first place.

The relations of this order are either of objects believed by us to co-exist without, or of feelings that are considered by us as if co-existing in one complex state of mind.

Of the nature of this latter species of virtual, but not absolute co-existence, I have already spoken too often to require again to caution you against a mistake into which, I must confess, that the terms, which the poverty of our language obliges us to use, might, of themselves, very naturally lead you;—the mistake of supposing that the most complex states of mind are not truly, in their very essence, as much one and indivisible as those which we term simple—the complexity and seeming co-existence which they involve being relative to our feeling only, not to their own absolute nature. I trust I need not repeat to you, that, in itself, every notion, however seemingly complex, is, and must be, truly simple—being one state, or affection, of one simple substance, mind. Our conception of a whole army, for example, is as truly this one mind existing in this one state, as our conception of any of the individuals that compose an army: our notion of the abstract numbers, eight, four, two, as truly one feeling of the mind, as our notion of simple unity. But, by the very nature or original tendency of the mind, it is impossible for us not to regard the notion of eight as involving, or having the

relation of equality to two of four, four of two, eight of one; and it is in consequence merely of this feeling of the virtual equivalence of one state of mind, which we therefore term complex, to many other states of mind, which we term simple, that we are able to perceive various relations of equality, or proportion, in the complex feeling which seems to us to embrace them all in one joint conception—not in consequence of any real co-existence of separate parts, in a feeling that is necessarily and essentially indivisible. It is, as I before stated to you, on this virtual complexity alone that the mathematical sciences are founded; since these are only forms of expressing the relations of proportion, which we feel of one seeming part of a complex conception, to other seeming parts of that complex conception, which appear to us as if mentally separable from the rest.

I proceed, then, now, to the consideration of the first of our classes of relations,—those of which the subjects are regarded, without reference to time. To this order of real co-existence, as in matter, or of seeming co-existence, as in the complex phenomena of the mind, belong the relations of position, resemblance or difference, proportion, degree, comprehension. I am aware, that some of these might, by a little refinement of analysis, be made to coincide,—that, for example, both proportion and degree might, by a little effort, be forced to find a place in that division which I have termed comprehension, or the relation of a whole to the separate parts included in it; but I am aware, at the same time, that this could not be done without an effort,—and an effort too, in some cases, of very subtle reasoning; and I prefer, therefore, the division which I have now made, as sufficiently distinct for every purpose of arrangement.



I look at a number of men, as they stand together. If I merely perceived each individually, or the whole as one complex group, I should not have the feeling of relation; but I remark one, and I observe who is next to him, who second, who third; who stands on the summit of a little eminence above all the rest; who on the declivity; who on the plain beneath; that is to say, my mind exists in the states which constitute various feelings of the relation of position.

I see two flowers, of the same tints and form, in my path. I lift my eye to two cliffs of corresponding outline, that hang above my head. I look at a picture, and I think of the well-known face which it represents; or, I listen to a ballad, and seem almost to hear again some kindred melody which it wakes in my remembrance. In each of these cases, if the relative suggestion take place, my mind, after existing in the states which constitute the perception, or the remembrance of the two similar objects, exists immediately in that state which constitutes the feeling of resemblance, as it exists in the state which constitutes the feeling of difference, when I think of certain circumstances in which objects, though similar, perhaps, in other respects, have no correspondence or similarity whatever.

I think of the vertical angles, formed by two straight lines, which cut one another; of the pairs of numbers, four and sixteen, five and twenty,—of the dimensions of the columns, and their bases and entablatures, in the different orders; and my mind exists immediately in that state which constitutes the feeling of proportion.

I hear one voice, and then a voice which is louder. I take up some flowers, and smell first one, and then another, more or less fragrant. I remember many days of happiness, spent with friends who are far dis-

tant,—and I look forward to the day of still greater happiness, when we are to meet again. In these instances of spontaneous comparison, my mind exists in that state which constitutes the feeling of degree.

I consider a house, and its different apartments,—a tree, and its branches, and stems, and foliage,—a horse, and its limbs, and trunk, and head. My mind, which had existed in the states that constituted the simple perception of these objects, begins immediately to exist in that different state which constitutes the feeling of the relation of parts to one comprehensive whole.

In these varieties of relative suggestion, some one of which, as you will find, is all that constitutes each individual judgment, even in the longest series of our ratiocination,—nothing more is necessary to the suggestion, or rise of the feeling of relation, than the simple previous perceptions, or conceptions, between the objects of which the relation is felt to subsist. When I look at two flowers, it is not necessary that I should have formed any intentional comparison. But the similitude strikes me, before any desire of discovering resemblance can have arisen. I may, indeed, resolve to trace, as far as I am able, the resemblances of particular objects, and may study them accordingly; but this very desire presupposes, in the mind, a capacity of relative suggestion, of which it avails itself, in the same manner as the intention of climbing a hill, or traversing a meadow, implies the power of muscular motion as a part of our physical constitution.

The susceptibility of the feeling of relation, in considering objects together, is as easy to be conceived, in the mind, as its primary susceptibility of sensation, when these objects were originally perceived, whether

separately or together; and, if nothing had before been written on the subject, I might very safely leave you to trace, for yourselves, the modifications of relative suggestion, in all the simple or consecutive judgments which we form: but so much mystery has been supposed to hang about it, and the art of logic, which should consist only in the development of this simple tendency of suggestion, has rendered so obscure what would have been very clear but for the labour which has been employed in striving to make it clear, that it will be necessary to dwell a little longer on these separate tribes of relations, at least on the most important tribes of them, not so much for the purpose of showing what they are, as to show what they are not.

The first species of relation, to which I am to direct your particular attention, is that of resemblance.

When, in considering the relation of resemblance, we think only of such obvious suggestions as those by which we feel the similarity of one mountain or lake to another mountain or lake, or of a picture to the living features that seem in it almost to have a second life, we regard it merely as a source of additional pleasure to the mind, which, in moments that might otherwise be listless and unoccupied, is delighted and busied with a new order of feelings. Even this advantage of the relation, slight as it is, when compared with other more important advantages of it, is not to be regarded as of little value. I need not say, of how much pleasure the imitative arts, that are founded on this relation, are the source. In the most closely imitative of them all, that which gives to us the very forms of those whose works of genius or of virtue have commanded or won our admiration, and transmits them from age to age, as if not life merely.



but immortality, flowed in the colours of the artist's pencil; or, to speak of its still happier use, which preserves to us the lineaments of those whom we love, when separated from us either by distance or by the tomb,—how many of the feelings which we should regret most to lose, would be lost but for this delightful art,—feelings that ennoble us, by giving us the wish to imitate what was noble in the moral hero or sage, on whom we gaze, or that comfort us, by the imaginary presence of those whose affection is the only thing that is dearer to us than even our admiration of heroism and wisdom. The value of painting will, indeed, best be felt by those who have lost, by death, a parent or much-loved friend, and who feel that they would not have lost everything if some pictured memorial had still remained.

Then, for a beam of joy, to light  
In memory's sad and wakeful eye;  
Or banish, from the noon of night,  
Her dreams of deeper agony.

Shall song its witching cadence roll?  
Yea, even the tenderest air repeat,  
That breath'd, when soul was knit to soul,  
And heart to heart responsive beat.

What visions wake—to charm—to melt?  
The lost, the loved, the dead are near.  
O hush that strain, too deeply felt!  
And cease that solace, too severe!

But thou, serenely silent art!  
By Heaven and Love was taught to lend  
A milder solace to the heart—  
The sacred image of a friend.

No spectre forms of pleasure fled  
Thy softening, sweetening tints restore;  
For thou canst give us back the dead,  
Even in the loveliest looks they wore. *Campbell.*

In the wide variety of nature, how readily do we catch the resemblance of object to object, and scene to scene. With what pleasure do those, who have been long separated from the land of their youth, trace the slightest similarity to that familiar landscape which they never can forget! In reading the narratives of voyages of discovery, there is something which appears to me almost pathetic, in the very names given by the discoverers, to the islands, or parts of islands or continents, which they have been the first to explore. We feel how strong is that omnipresent affection which, in spaces that have never been traversed before, at the widest distance which the limits of the globe admit, still binds, to the land which gave them birth, even those to whom their country can scarcely be said to be their home, so much as the ocean which divides them from it. It is some rock, or river, or bay, or promontory of his native shore, that, before he has given a name to the rock, or river, or bay, or promontory which he sees, has become present to the sailor's eye, and made the most dreary waste of savage sterility seem, for the moment, a part of his own populous soil of cultivation and busy happiness.

Of the influence of this suggestion on our complex emotion of beauty, I shall have an opportunity of speaking afterwards. At present it is only as a mere physical fact, illustrative of the peculiar mental susceptibility which we are considering, that I remind you of the pleasure which we feel in every similarity perceived by us, in new scenes and forms, to those with which we have been intimately and happily familiar.

These immediate effects of the feeling of obvious resemblance, however, delightful as they may be, are.

in their permanent effects, unimportant, when compared with the results of resemblances of a more abstract kind—the resemblances to which we owe all classification, and, consequently, everything which is valuable in language.

That classification is founded on the relation of similarity of some sort in the objects classed together, and could not have been formed if the mind, in addition to its primary powers of external sense, had not possessed that secondary power, by which it invests with certain relations the objects which it perceives, is most evident. All which is strictly sensitive in the mind might have been the same as now; and the perception of a sheep might have succeeded one thousand times the perception of a horse, without suggesting the notion which leads us to form the general term quadruped or animal, inclusive of both; for the relation is truly no part of the object perceived by us, and classed as relative and correlative, each of which would be precisely the same in every quality which it possesses, and in every feeling which it directly excites, though the others, with which it may be classed, had no existence. It is from the laws of the mind which considers them that the relation is derived, not from the laws or direct qualities of the objects considered. But for our susceptibilities of those affections, or states of mind, which constitute the feeling of similarity, all objects would have been to us, in the scholastic sense of the phrase, things singular, and all language, consequently, nothing more than the expression of individual existence. Such a language, it is very evident, would be of little service, in any respect, and of no aid to the memory, which it would oppress rather than relieve. It is the use of general terms, that is to say, of terms founded on the feeling



of resemblance, which alone gives to language its power, enabling us to condense, in a single word, the innumerable objects which, if we attempted to grasp them all individually in our conception, we should be as little able to comprehend, as to gather all the masses of all the planets in the narrow concavity of that hand which a few particles are sufficient to fill, and which soon sinks oppressed with the weight of the few particles that fill it.

That man can reason without language of any kind, and consequently without general terms—though the opposite opinion is maintained by many very eminent philosophers—seems to me not to admit of any reasonable doubt, or, if it required any proof to be sufficiently shown, by the very invention of the language which involves these general terms, and still more sensibly by the conduct of the uninstructed deaf and dumb—to which, also, the evident marks of reasoning in the other animals—of reasoning which I cannot but think as unquestionable as the instincts that mingle with it—may be said to furnish a very striking additional argument from analogy. But it is not less certain that, without general terms, reasoning must be very imperfect, and scarcely worthy of the name, when compared with that noble power which language has rendered it. The art of definition, which is merely the art of fixing, in a single word or phrase, the particular circumstance of agreement of various individual objects, which, in consequence of this feeling of relation, we have chosen to class together, gives us certain fixed points of reference, both for ourselves and others, without which it would be impossible for us to know the progress which we have made, impossible to remember accurately the results even of a single reasoning, and to

apply them with profit to future analysis. Nor would knowledge be vague only; it would, but for general terms, be as incommunicable as vague; for it must be remembered, that such terms form almost the whole of the great medium by which we communicate with each other. "Grammarians," says Dr Reid, "have reduced all words to eight or nine classes, which are called parts of speech. Of these there is only one, to wit, that of nouns, wherein proper names are found. All pronouns, verbs, participles, adverbs, articles, prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections, are general words. Of nouns, all adjectives are general words, and the greater part of substantives. Every substantive that has a plural number is a general word; for no proper name can have a plural number, because it signifies only one individual. In all the fifteen books of Euclid's Elements," he continues, "there is not one word that is not general; and the same may be said of many large volumes."<sup>1</sup>

In the account which Swift gives of his Academy of Projectors in Lagado, he mentions one project for making things supply the place of language; and he speaks only of the difficulty of carrying about all the things necessary for discourse, which would be far the least evil of this species of eloquence; since all the things of the universe, even though they could be carried about as commodiously as a watch or a snuff-box, could not supply the place of language, which expresses chiefly the relations of things, and which, even when it expresses things themselves, is of no use but as expressing or implying those relations which they bear to us or to each other.

"There was a scheme," he says, "for entirely abolishing all words whatsoever, and this was urged

<sup>1</sup> Reid on the Intellectual Powers, Essay V. c. i.

of the advantage in point of health, as well as of the convenience, that every word we speak is attended with a diminution of our lungs by contracting the many quantities to the shortening of the breath. An expedient was therefore offered, and since we are not names for things, it would be convenient for all men to carry about them some things as convenient to express a particular sense, and as a discourse in. And this invention was first taken place, to the great advantage of the men, if the women, in particular, who are vulgar and illiterate, had not been so much concerned, unless they might be able to express their thoughts with their tongues, after the manner of their fathers: such constant irrelevance of discourse as the common people, and even many of the most learned and wise adhere to, is owing to their distressing themselves by things, and to the many inconveniences attending it, that they are obliged to carry great and of various kinds of things about them, in proportion to carry a greater weight of things, than he can afford to carry, unless he has some one to attend him. I have seen many of these sages almost sinking under the weight of their things like pillars among us: who, when they are in the street, will lay down their things, and sit down, and hold conversation for an hour, and then get up by their implements, help one another to resume their burdens, and take their way.

It is not to be thought that to a genius like that of Seneca, or a subject of philosophical ridicule than that of a philosopher, which his sages felt in carrying a sufficient stock of things about with them, might have



been found in their awkward attempts to make these things supply the place of abstract language. In his own great field of political irony, for example, how many subjects of happy satire might he have found in the emblems, to which his patriots and courtiers, in their most zealous professions of public devotion, might have been obliged to have recourse; the painful awkwardness of the political expectant of places and dignities, who was outwardly to have no wish but for the welfare of his country, yet could find nothing but mitres, and maces, and seals, and pieces of stamped metal, with which to express the purity of his disinterested patriotism; and the hurrying eagerness of the statesman to change instantly the whole upholstery of language in his house for new political furniture, in consequence of the mere accident of his removal from office.

Without the use of any such satirical demonstration of the doctrine, however, it is sufficiently evident, that if man had no general terms, verbal language could be but of very feeble additional aid to the language of natural signs; and, if the situation of man would be thus deplorable without the mere signs of general notions, how infinitely more so must it have been if he had been incapable of the very notions themselves. The whole conduct of life is a perpetual practical application of the intuitive maxim, that similar antecedents will be followed by similar consequents, which implies the necessity, in every case, of some rude classification of objects as similar. The fire which the child sees to-day is not the fire which burnt him yesterday; and if he were insensible of the resemblance, to the exclusion, perhaps, of many circumstances that differ, the remembrance of the effect of the fire of yesterday would be of no advantage in guarding him

against similar exposure. It is in consequence of notions of little genera and species of good and evil, which he has formed mentally long before he distinguishes them by their appropriate general terms, that the infant is enabled to avoid what would be hurtful, and thus to prolong his existence to the period at which, in applying the multitude of words in his language, in all their varieties of inflection, he shows that he has long been philosophizing, in circumstances that seemed to indicate little more than the capacity of animal pleasure or pain, and innocent affection. What, indeed, can be more truly astonishing than the progress which a being so very helpless, and apparently so incapable of any systematic effort, or even of the very wish which such an effort implies, makes in so short a time, in connecting ideas and sounds that have no relation but what is purely arbitrary, and in adapting them, with all those nice modifications of expression, according to circumstances, of which he can scarcely be thought to have any conception so distinct and accurate as the very language which he uses. "We cannot instruct them," it has been truly remarked, "without speaking to them in a language which they do not understand; and yet they learn it. Even when we speak to them, it is usually without any design of instructing them; and they learn, in like manner, of themselves, without any design of learning. We never speak to them of the rules of syntax; and they practise all these rules without knowing what they are. In a single year or two they have formed in their heads a grammar, a dictionary, and almost a little art of rhetoric, with which they know well how to persuade and to charm us."<sup>1</sup> "Is it not a hard thing," says Berkeley, "that a couple of children cannot prate to-

<sup>1</sup> André, p. 221.

gether of their sugar-plums and rattles, and the rest of their little trinkets, till they have first tacked together numberless inconsistencies, and so formed in their minds abstract general ideas, and annexed them to every common name they make use of?" All this early generalisation, admirable as it is, is certainly not, as he says, a hard thing; for it is the result of laws of mind, as simple as the laws on which the very perception of the sugar-plums and rattles depended; but it is a beautiful illustration of that very principle of general nomenclature which Berkeley adduced it to disprove. If children can discover two rattles or two sugar-plums to be like each other—and the possibility of this surely no one will deny, who may not, in like manner, deny the possibility of those sensations by which they perceive a single rattle or a single sugar-plum—they must already have formed those abstract general notions which are said to be so hard a thing; for this very feeling of similarity is all which constitutes the general notion; and when the general notion of the resemblance of the two objects has arisen, it is as little wonderful that the general term rattle or sugar-plum should be used to express it, as that any particular name should be used to express each separate inhabitant or familiar visiter of the nursery, or any other word of any other kind to express any other existing feeling.

The perception of objects; the feeling of their resemblance in certain respects; the invention of a name for these circumstances of felt resemblance: What can be more truly and readily conceivable than this process! And yet on this process, apparently so very simple, has been founded all that controversy as to universals, which so long distracted the schools; and which far more wonderfully—for the distraction



of the schools by a few unintelligible words scarcely can be counted wonderful—continues still to perplex philosophers with difficulties which themselves have made; with difficulties which they could not even have made to themselves, if they had thought for a single moment of the nature of that feeling of the relation of similarity which we are now considering.

My further remarks on the theory of general notions, I must defer till my next Lecture.

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#### LECTURE XLVI.

*On the Relative Feelings belonging to the Order of Co-existence, continued—Metaphysical Errors concerning them involved in the Hypotheses of Realism and Nominalism.*

HAVING brought to a conclusion my remarks on the phenomena of Simple Suggestion, I entered, in my last Lecture, on the consideration of those states of mind which constitute our feelings of relation—the results of that peculiar mental tendency to which, as distinguished from the simple suggestion that furnishes the other class of our intellectual states of mind, I have given the name of Relative Suggestion. The relations which we are thus capable of feeling, as they rise by internal suggestion, on the mere perception or conception of two or more objects, I divided, in conformity with our primary division of the objects of physical inquiry, into the relations of co-existence, and the relations of succession, according as the notion of time or change is not or is involved in them; and the former of these, the relations that are considered by us without any regard to

time, I arranged in subdivisions, according to the notions which they involve, 1st, Of Position; 2d, Resemblance, or difference; 3d, Of Degree; 4th, Of Proportion; 5th, Of Comprehensiveness, or the relation which a whole bears to the separate parts that are included in it.

These various relations I briefly illustrated in the order in which I have now mentioned them, and showed how very simple that mental process is by which they arise; as simple, indeed, and as easily conceivable, as that by which the primary perceptions themselves arise. On some of them, however, I felt it necessary to dwell with fuller elucidation; not on account of any greater mystery in the suggestions on which they depend, but on account of that greater mystery which has been supposed to hang about them.

A great part of my Lecture, accordingly, was employed in considering the relation of resemblance, which, by the general notions and corresponding general terms that flow from it, we found to be the source of classification and definition, and of all that is valuable in language.

A horse, an ox, a sheep, have, in themselves, as individual beings, precisely the same qualities, whether the others be or be not considered by us at the same time. When, in looking at them, we are struck with their resemblance, in certain respects, they are themselves exactly the same individuals as before, the only change which has taken place being a feeling of our own mind. And, in like manner, in the next stage of the process of verbal generalisation, when, in consequence of this feeling of relation in our own minds, we proceed to term them quadrupeds or animals, no quality has been taken from the objects which we have ranged together under this new term, and as

little has any new quality been given to them. Everything in the objects is precisely the same as before, and acts in precisely the same manner on our senses as when the word quadruped or animal was uninvented. The general terms are expressive of our own internal feelings of resemblance, and of nothing more—expressive of what is in us, and dependent wholly on laws of mind, not of what is in them, and directly dependent in any degree on laws of matter.

That, in looking at a horse, an ox, a sheep, we should be struck with a feeling of their resemblance in certain respects,—that to those respects in which they are felt to resemble each other, we should give a name, as we give a name to each of them individually, comprehending under the general name such objects only as excite, when considered together with others, the feeling of this particular relation,—all this has surely nothing very mysterious in it. It would, indeed, be more mysterious if, perceiving the resemblances of objects that are constantly around us, we did not avail ourselves of language, as a mode of communicating to others our feeling of the resemblance, as we avail ourselves of it in the particular denomination of the individual, to inform others of that particular object of which we speak; and to express the common resemblance which we feel by any word, is to have invented already a general term, significant of the felt relation. The process is in itself sufficiently simple; and if we had never heard of any controversies with respect to it, we probably could not have suspected that the mere giving of a name to resemblances which all perceive, and the subsequent application of the name only where the resemblance is felt, should have been thought to have any thing in it more mysterious than the mere giving of a name to



the separate objects which all perceive, and the repetition of that name when the separate objects are again perceived. It assumes, however, immediately an air of mystery when we are told that it relates to the predicables of the schools, and to all that long controversy with respect to the essence of universals, which divided not merely schoolman against schoolman, but nation against nation; when kings and emperors, who had so many other frivolous causes of warfare, without the addition of this, were eager to take up arms, and besiege towns, and cover fields with wounded and dead, for the honour of the universal *a parte rei*. It is difficult for us to think that that could be simple which could produce so much fierce contention; and we strive to explain in our own mind, and, therefore, begin to see many wonderful, and perhaps unintelligible, or at least doubtful things, in phenomena, which we never should have conceived to require explanation, if others had not laboured to explain them by clouding them with words. It is with many intellectual controversies as with the gymnastic exercises of the arena; the dust, which the conflict itself raises, soon darkens that air which was clear before, and the longer the conflict lasts the greater the dimness which arises from it. When the combatants are very many, and the combat very long and active, we may still, indeed, be able to see the mimicry of fight, and distinguish the victors from the vanquished; but even then we scarcely see distinctly; and all which remains, when the victory at last is won, or when both parties are sufficiently choked with dust, and weary, is the cloud of sand which they have raised, and perhaps some traces of the spots where each has fallen.

It surely cannot be denied, that the mind, with its

other susceptibilities of feeling, has a susceptibility also of the feeling of the relation of similarity; or, in other words, that certain objects, when we perceive or think of them together, appear to us to resemble each other in certain respects; that, for example, in looking at a horse, a crow, a sparrow, a sheep, we perceive that the horse and sheep agree in having four legs, which the crow and sparrow have not; and that, perceiving the horse and sheep to agree in this respect, and not the birds, we should distinguish them accordingly, and call the one set quadrupeds, the other bipeds, is as little wonderful as that we should have given to each of these animals its individual designation. If there be that relative suggestion which constitutes the feeling of resemblance—and what sceptic, if he analyze the process fairly, will deny this as a mere feeling, or state of mind?—the general term may almost be said to follow of course. Yet, for how many ages did this simple process perplex and agitate the schools, which, agreeing in almost everything that was complicated and absurd, could not agree in what was simple and just; and could not agree in it precisely because it was too simple and just to accord with the other parts of that strange system, which, by a most absurd misnomer, was honoured with the name of philosophy. That during the prevalence of the scholastic opinions as to perception, which were certainly far better fitted to harmonize with errors and mysteries than with simple truths, the subject of generalisation should have appeared mysterious, is not, indeed, very surprising. But I must confess, that there is nothing in the history of our science which appears to me so wonderful as that any difficulty, at least any difficulty greater than every phenomenon of every kind involves,

should now be conceived to be attached to this very simple process; and, especially, that philosophers should be so nearly unanimous in an opinion on the subject, which, though directly opposed to the prevalent error in the ancient schools, is not the less itself an error.

The process, as I have already described it to you, is the following:—In the first place, the perception of two or more objects; in the second place, the feeling or notion of their resemblance, immediately subsequent to the perception; and lastly, the expression of this common relative feeling by a name which is used afterwards as a general denomination for all those objects, the perception of which is followed by the same common feeling of resemblance. The general term, you will remark, as expressing uniformly some felt relation of objects, is, in this case, significant of a state of mind essentially distinct from those previous states of mind which constituted the perception of the separate objects, as truly distinct from these primary perceptions as any one state of mind can be said to differ from any other state of mind. We might have perceived a sheep, a horse, an ox, successively, in endless series, and yet never have invented the term quadruped, as inclusive of all these animals, if we had not felt that particular relation of similarity which the term quadruped, as applied to various objects, denotes. The feeling of this resemblance, in certain respects, is the true general notion, or general idea, as it has been less properly called, which the corresponding general term expresses; and, but for this previous general notion of some circumstance of resemblance, the general term, expressive of this general notion, could as little have been invented as the terms green, yellow, scarlet, could have been invented in their present sense, by a nation of the blind.



In the view which is taken of this process of generalisation, as of every other process, there may be error in two ways; either by adding to the process what forms no part of it, or by omitting what does truly form a part of it. Thus, if we were to say, that, between the perception of a horse and sheep, and the feeling of their resemblance in a certain respect, there intervenes the presence of some external independent substance,—some universal form or species of a quadruped, distinct from our conceiving mind, which, acting on the mind, or being present with it, produces the notion of a quadruped, in the same way as the presence of the external horse or sheep produced the perception of these individually,—we should err, in the former of these ways, by introducing into the process, something of which we have no reason to suppose the existence, and which is not merely unnecessary, but would involve the process in innumerable perplexities and apparent inconsistencies, if it did exist. This redundancy would be one species of error; but it would not less be an error, though an error of an opposite kind, were we to suppose that any part of the process does not take place,—that, for example, there is no relative suggestion, no rise in the mind of an intervening general notion of resemblance, before the invention and employment of the general term, but the mere perception of a multitude of objects, in the first place; and, then, as if an instant succession without any other intervening mental state whatever, the general names under which whole multitudes are classed.

I have instanced these errors of supposed excess and deficiency, in the statement of the process, without alluding to any sects which have maintained them. I may now, however, remark, that the two opposite errors, which I have merely supposed, are the very

errors involved in the opinions of the Realists and Nominalists, the great combatants in that most disputatious of controversies, to which I have before alluded; a controversy which, in the strong language of John of Salisbury, even at that early period, of which alone he could speak, had already employed fruitlessly more time and thought than the whole race of the Cæsars had found necessary for acquiring and exercising the sovereignty of the world: "*Quæstionem*," he calls it, "*in qua laborans mundus jam senuit, in qua plus temporis consumptum est, quam in acquirendo et regendo orbis imperio consumpserit Cæsarea domus; plus effusum pecuniæ, quam in omnibus divitiis suis possederit Cræsus. Hæc enim tamdiu multos tenuit, ut cum hoc unum totâ vitâ quærerent, tandem nec istud, nec aliud, invenirent.*"

However absurd, and almost inconceivable the belief of the substantial reality of genera and species, as separate and independent essences, may appear, on first consideration, we must not forget that it is to be viewed as a part of a great system, with which it readily harmonizes, and with which a juster view of the generalizing process would have been absolutely discordant.

While the doctrine of perception, by species, prevailed, it is not wonderful, as I have already said, that those who conceived ideas, in perception, to be things distinct from the mind,—the idea of a particular horse, for example, to be something different, both from the horse itself, and from the mind which perceived it,—should have conceived also, that, in forming the notion of the comparative nature of horses, in general, or quadrupeds, or animals, there must have been present, in like manner, some species distinct from the mind, which, of course, could not be particular, like the sen-





lay revealed, whatever can be known to man. *Cui soli patuit scibile quicquid erat.*" These two eminent logicians, Roscelinus and Abelard, though differing in some slight respects in their own Nominalism, coincided in rejecting wholly the Realism, which, till then, had been the unquestioned doctrine of the schools. According to them, there was no universality *a parte rei*, nor any thing that could be called universal, but the mere general terms, under which particular objects were ranked. The denial of the reality of universals, however, which was an attack on the general faith, was of course regarded as a heresy, and was probably regarded the more as an unwarrantable innovation, on account of the heresies, in opinions more strictly theological, of which both Roscelinus and his illustrious pupil had been convicted. Though their talents, therefore, were able to excite a powerful division in the schools, their doctrine gradually sank beneath the orthodoxy of their opponents; till, in the fourteenth century, the authority of the sect was revived by the genius of William Occam, an Englishman, one of the most acute polemics of his age; and the controversy, under his powerful championship, was agitated again, with double fervour. It was no longer, indeed, a mere war of words, or of censures and ecclesiastical penalties, but, in some measure also, a war of nations; the Emperor Lewis of Bavaria siding with Occam, and Lewis the Eleventh of France giving the weight of his power to the Realists. The violence on both sides was like that which usually rages only in the rancour of political faction, or the intolerance of religious persecution. Indeed, as might well be supposed, in a period in which an accusation of heresy was one of the most powerful and triumphant arguments of logic, which nothing could meet and repel but an argument

of the same kind, religion was soon introduced into the controversy; and both sects, though agreeing in little more, concurred, with equal devotion, in charging their opponents with no less a sin than the sin against the Holy Ghost.

At the Reformation, the fury of the controversy was suspended by more important interests—interests which affected equally both those who separated from the Romish church and those who adhered to it; and perhaps too, in some degree, by the wider views which at that time were beginning to open in literature and general science. The question has since been a question of pure philosophy, in which there has been no attempt to interest sovereigns in wars of metaphysics, or to find new subjects for accusations of religious heresy. It has continued, however, to engage, in a very considerable degree, the attention of philosophers, whose general opinion has leant to that of the sect of the Nominalists. In our own country, particularly, I may refer to the very eminent names of Hobbes, Berkeley, Hume, Dr Campbell, and Mr Stewart, who are Nominalists, in the strictest sense of that term. Indeed, the only names of authority which I can oppose to them, are those of Locke and Dr Reid.

Locke and Reid, however, though holding opinions on this subject very different from those of the Nominalists, are not Realists—for, after the view which I have given you of the peculiar opinions of that sect, it is surely unnecessary for me to add, that there are no longer any defenders of the universal *a parte rei*. There is no one now—certainly no one worthy of the name of a philosopher—who believes that there is any external entity corresponding with the general notion man, and distinct from all the individual men perceived by us, and from our mind itself, which has

perceived them. The only opinion which can now be considered as opposed to that of the rigid Nominalists, is the opinion which I have endeavoured to exhibit to you, in a form more simple than that in which it is usually exhibited, stripped, as much as it was possible for me to strip it, of all that obscurity with which a long controversy of words had clouded it; and precluding, therefore, I trust, those mistakes, as to the nature of our general notions or feelings of resemblance, on which alone the denial of the notions as states of mind seems to have been founded. The view which I have given, however, though, I flatter myself, more clear in its analysis and reference to a particular class of feelings, is, in the main, inasmuch as it contends for a general feeling, of which every general term is significant, the same with the doctrine of Locke and Reid; and may, indeed, be traced far back in the controversy of universals; a considerable number of philosophers, who agreed with the stricter Nominalists in rejecting the notion of universal essences, having adopted this middle doctrine, or at least a doctrine nearly approaching to it; and been distinguished accordingly, from the other parties, by the name of *Conceptualists*—"conceptuales." Their joint opposition to the absurdities of Realism, however, occasioned them to be confounded with the Nominalists, from whom they differed certainly as much as from the Realists themselves; and I cannot but think that it is merely in consequence of being thus confounded with Conceptualism, and presenting, therefore, some vague notions of more than mere general terms and particular perceptions, that the doctrine of the Nominalists has been able to obtain the assent and sanction of its illustrious modern defenders, whom I am thus almost inclined to consider



as unconsciously, in thought, Conceptualists, even while they are Nominalists in argument and language. Or rather—for the word conception, I confess, does not seem to me a very proper one for expressing that feeling of general resemblance which I consider as a mere feeling of relation—I almost think that some obscure glimpse of that more precise doctrine which I have now delivered to you, must have had a sort of truly unconscious influence on the belief of the Nominalists themselves, in that imperfect view which they present to others of the process of generalisation.

Of that rigid Nominalism which involves truly no mixture of Conceptualism, or of the belief of those feelings of relation for which I have contended, but denies altogether the existence of that peculiar class of feelings, or states of mind which have been denominated general notions, or general ideas, asserting the existence only of individual objects perceived, and of general terms that comprehend these, without any peculiar mental state denoted by the general term, distinct from those separate sensations or perceptions which the particular objects, comprehended under the term, might individually excite—it seems to me that the very statement of the opinion itself is almost a sufficient confutation, since the very invention of the general term, and the extension of it to certain objects only, not to all objects, implies some reason for this limitation—some feeling of general agreement of the objects included in the class, to distinguish them from the objects not included in it, which is itself that very general notion professedly denied. As long as some general notion of circumstances of resemblance is admitted, I see very clearly how a general term may be most accurately limited; but if this general notion be denied, I confess that I cannot

discover any principle of limitation whatever. Why have certain objects been classed together, and not certain other objects, when all have been alike perceived by us; and all, therefore, if there be nothing more than mere perception in the process, are capable of receiving any denomination which we may please to bestow on them? Is it arbitrarily, and without any reason whatever, that we do not class a rose-bush with birds, or an elephant with fish? and if there be any reason for these exclusions, why will not the Nominalist tell us what that reason is—in what feeling it is found—and how it can be made accordant with his system? Must it not be that the rose-bush and a sparrow, though equally perceived by us, do not excite that general notion of resemblance which the term bird is invented to express; do not seem to us to have those relations of a common nature, in certain respects, which lead us to class the sparrow and the ostrich, however different in other respects, as birds; or the petty natives of our brooks and rivulets with the mighty monsters of the deep, under one general and equal denomination? If this be the reason, there is more, in every case, than perception and the giving of a general name; for there is a peculiar state of mind—a general relative feeling—intervening between the perception and the invention of the term, which is the only reason that can be assigned for that very invention. Can the Nominalist then assert, that there is no feeling of the resemblance of objects, in certain respects, which thus intervenes between the perception of them as separate objects, which is one stage of the process, and the comprehension of them under a single name, which is another stage of the process; or must he not rather confess, that it is merely in consequence of this intervening feeling we give to the

number of objects their general name, to the exclusion of the multitudes of objects to which we do not apply it, as it is in consequence of certain other feelings, excited by them individually, we give to each separate object its proper name, to the exclusion of every other object? To repeat the process, as already described to you, we perceive two or more objects; we are struck with their resemblance in certain respects; we invent a general name to denote this feeling of resemblance; and we class, under this general name, every particular object, the perception of which is followed by the same feeling of resemblance, and no objects but these alone. If this be a faithful statement of the process,—and for its fidelity I may safely appeal to your consciousness,—the doctrine of the Nominalists is not less false than that of the Realists. It is false, because it excludes that general feeling of resemblance,—the relative suggestion,—which is all that the general name itself truly designates, and without which, therefore, it never would have been invented; while the doctrine of the Realists is false, by inserting in the process those supposed separate entities which form no part of it. The one errs, as I have already said, by excess, the other by deficiency.

Even in professing to exclude the general notion of resemblance, however, the Nominalist unconsciously proceeds on it; and no stronger proof can be imagined of the imperfectness of the view which his system gives of our generalisations, than the constant necessity under which we perceive him to labour, of assuming, at every stage of his argument, the existence of those very notions, or feelings of relative suggestion, against which his argument is directed. The general term, we are told, is significant of all objects of a certain kind, or a particular idea is made to represent



various other ideas of the same sort; as if the very doctrine did not necessarily exclude all notion of a kind or sort, independent of the application of the term itself. "An idea," says Berkeley, "which, considered in itself, is particular, becomes general, by being made to represent or stand for all other particular ideas of the same sort;" and he instances this in the case of a line of any particular length—an inch, for example—which, to a geometer, he says, becomes general, as "it represents all particular lines whatsoever; so that what is demonstrated of it, is demonstrated of all lines, or, in other words, of a line in general." It is truly inconceivable that he should not have discovered, in this very statement, that he had taken for granted the existence of general notions, the very states of mind which he denied; since, without these, there can be no meaning in the restriction of any sign, to "ideas of the same sort." If we have previously a notion of what he himself, rather inconsistently, calls a line in general, we can easily understand how the word line may be limited to ideas of one sort; but if we have no such previous general notion, we cannot have any knowledge of the sort to which we are, notwithstanding, said to limit our term. An inch, which is certainly not the same figure as a foot or a yard, is, on the principles of Nominalism, which exclude all knowledge of the nature of lines in general, essentially different from these; and might as well, but for that general notion of the resemblance of lines which all have, independently of the term, and previously to the term, but which Nominalism does not allow to exist, be significant of a square, or a circle, as of any other simple length. To say that it represents all particular lines whatsoever, is either to say nothing, or it is to say that certain general notions of resemblance exist truly,

as a part of our consciousness, and that we are hence able to attach a meaning to the phrase, "all particular lines whatsoever;" which we could not, if a foot, a yard, a mile, did not appear to us to resemble each other in some respect. It is in vain that Berkeley,—who is aware of the objection which may be brought from the universal truths of geometry, against a system which denies everything but particular ideas, and the signs of particular ideas,—endeavours to reconcile this denial of the conception of universality, with that very universality which it denies. It is quite evident, that, if we have no general notions of squares and triangles, our demonstration of the properties of these figures never can go beyond those particular squares or triangles conceived by us in our demonstration. Thus, says Berkeley, who states the objection, and endeavours to answer it,—“having demonstrated that the three angles of an isosceles rectangular triangle are equal to two right ones, I cannot therefore conclude this affection agrees to all other triangles, which have neither a right angle, nor two equal sides. It seems, therefore, that, to be certain this proposition is universally true, we must either make a particular demonstration for every particular triangle, which is impossible, or, once for all, demonstrate it of the abstract idea of a triangle, in which all the particulars do indifferently partake, and by which they are all equally represented. To which I answer, that though the idea I have in view, whilst I make the demonstration, be, for instance, that of an isosceles rectangular triangle, whose sides are of a determinate length, I may, nevertheless, be certain it extends to all other rectilinear triangles, of what sort or bigness soever, and that because neither the right angle, nor the equality, nor determinate length of the sides, are at all concerned

in the demonstration. It is true, the diagram I have in view includes all these particulars; but then there is not the least mention made of them in the proof of the proposition. It is not said the three angles are equal to two right ones, because one of them is a right angle, or because the sides comprehending it are of the same length; which sufficiently shows that the right angle might have been oblique, and the sides unequal, and, for all that, the demonstration have held good; and for this reason it is that I conclude that to be true, of any oblique angular or scalenon, which I had demonstrated, of a particular right-angled equicrural triangle, and not because I demonstrated the proposition of the abstract idea of a triangle."<sup>1</sup>

"This answer," I have said in my observations on Dr Darwin's *Zoonomia*, "this answer evidently takes for granted the truth of the opinion which it was intended to confute, by supposing us, during the demonstration, to have a general idea of triangles, without particular reference to the diagram before us. It will be admitted, that the right angle, and the equality of two of the sides, and the determinate length of the whole, are not expressed in the words of the demonstration; but words are of consequence only as they suggest ideas; and the ideas suggested by the demonstration, are the same as if these particular relations of the triangle had been mentioned at every step. It is not said that the three angles are equal to two right angles, because one of them is a right angle, or because the sides which comprehend that angle are of the same length; but it is proved that the three angles of the triangle, which has one of its angles a right angle, and the sides, which comprehend that angle, of equal length, are together equal to two right angles.

<sup>1</sup> Berkeley's Works, Lond. 1784, v. i. p. 13.



This particular demonstration is applicable only to triangles of one particular form. I cannot infer from it the existence of the same property, in figures essentially different: for, unless we admit the existence of general ideas, an equilateral triangle differs as much from a scalene rectangular triangle, as from a square. In both cases, there is no medium of comparison. To say that the two triangles agree, in having three sides and three angles, is to say, that there are general ideas of sides and angles; for, if they be particularized, and if, by the words *sides* and *angles*, be meant equal sides, and equal angles, it is evident that the two triangles do not agree in the slightest circumstance. Admitting, therefore, that I can enunciate a general proposition, the conception of which is impossible, I can be certain that the three angles of every triangle are together equal to two right angles, only when it has been demonstrated of triangles of every variety of figure; and, before this can be done, I must have it in my power to limit space, and chain down imagination."<sup>1</sup>

In Dr Campbell's illustrations of the power of signs, in his very ingenious work on the Philosophy of Rhetoric, he adopts and defends this doctrine, of the general representative power of particular ideas: making, of course, the same inconsistent assumption which Berkeley makes, and which every Nominalist must make, of those general notions of orders, sorts, or kinds, which his argument would lead us to deny. "When a geometrician," says he, "makes a diagram with chalk upon a board, and from it demonstrates some property of a straight-lined figure, no spectator ever imagines that he is demonstrating a property of nothing else but that individual white figure of five

<sup>1</sup> Brown's Observations on Darwin's Zoonomia, p. 142-144.

inches long, which is before him. Every one is satisfied that he is demonstrating a property of all that order, whether more or less extensive, of which it is both an example and a sign; all the order being understood to agree with it in certain characters, however different in other respects."<sup>1</sup> There can be no question that every one is, as Dr Campbell says, satisfied, that the demonstration extends to a whole order of figures; and the reason of this is, that the mind is capable of forming a general notion of an order of figures; for it really is not easy to be understood, how the mind should extend any demonstration to a whole order of figures, and to that order only, of which order itself it is said to be incapable of any notion. "The mind," continues Dr Campbell, "with the utmost facility, extends or contracts the representative power of the sign as the particular occasion requires. Thus, the same equilateral triangle will, with equal propriety, serve for the demonstration, not only of a property of all equilateral triangles, but of a property of all isosceles triangles, or even of a property of all triangles whatever."<sup>2</sup> The same diagram does, indeed, serve this purpose, but not from any extension or contraction of the representative power of the sign according to occasion. It is because we had a general notion of the nature of triangles,—or of the common circumstances in which the figures, to which alone we give the name of *triangles*, agree,—before we looked at the diagram, and had this general notion, common to the whole order, in view, during the whole demonstration. "Nay, so perfectly is this matter understood," Dr Campbell adds, "that, if the demonstrator, in any part, should recur to some property, as to the length of a side, belonging to the particular figure he

<sup>1</sup> Philosophy of Rhetoric, B. II. c. vi.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

hath constructed, but not essential to the kind mentioned in the proposition, and which the particular figure is solely intended to represent, every intelligent observer would instantly detect the fallacy. So entirely, for all the purposes of science, doth a particular serve for a whole species or genus."<sup>1</sup> But, on Dr Campbell's principles, what is the species or genus, and how does it differ from other species or genera? Instead of the explanation, therefore, which he gives, I would rather say, so certain is it, that, during the whole demonstration, or, at least, as often as any mention of the figures occurs, the general notion of the species or genus of figures, that is to say, of the circumstance of resemblance of these figures, has been present to the mind; since, if it had no such general notion, it could not instantly detect the slightest circumstance which the species or genus does not include. The particular idea is said to be representative of other ideas "that agree with it in certain characters." But what are these characters? If we do not understand what they are, we cannot, by our knowledge of them, make one idea representative of others; and, if we do know what the general characters are, we have already that general notion which renders the supposed representation unnecessary.

In this case, as in many other cases, I have no doubt, notwithstanding the apparent extravagance of the paradox, that it is because the doctrine of the Nominalists is very contrary to our feelings, we do not immediately discover it to be so. If it were nearer the truth, we should probably discover the error which it involves much more readily. The error escapes us, because our general terms convey so immediately to our mind that common relation which

<sup>1</sup> Philosophy of Rhetoric, B. II. c. vii.



they denote, that we supply, of ourselves, what is wanting in the process as described by the Nominalist—the feeling of the circumstances of resemblance, specific or generic, that are to guide us in the application, as they led us to the invention of our terms. We know what it is which he means, when he speaks of particular terms, or particular ideas, that become more generally significant, by standing for ideas of the same sort, or the same order, or species, or genus, or kind; and we therefore make for him, by the natural spontaneous suggestions of our own minds, the extension and limitation, which would be impossible on his own system. But for such an illusion, it seems to me scarcely possible to understand how so many of the first names, of which our science can boast, should be found among the defenders of an opinion which makes reasoning nothing more than a mere play upon words, or, at best, reduces very nearly to the same level the profoundest ratiocinations of intellectual, or physical, or mathematical philosophy, and the technical labours of the grammarian, or the lexicographer.

The system of the Nominalists, then, I must contend, though more simple than the system of the Realists, is not, any more than that system, a faithful statement of the process of generalisation. It is true, as it rejects the existence of any universal form or species, distinct from our mere feeling of general resemblance. But it is false, as it rejects the general relative feeling itself, which every general term denotes, and without which, to direct us in the extension and limitation of our terms, we should be in danger of giving the name of *triangle*, as much to a square or a circle, as to any three-sided figure. We perceive objects,—we have a feeling or general notion

of their resemblance,—we express this general notion by a general term. Such is the process of which we are conscious; and no system which omits any part of the process can be a faithful picture of our consciousness.

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### LECTURE XLVII.

*True Theory of Generalisation repeated—Incongruity in the Language of the Conceptualists—Smith's Theory of the Invention of General Terms in rude Periods of Society—Absurdity of Nominalism—Use of General Terms not to enable man to Reason, but to Reason well.*

My last Lecture, Gentlemen, was employed on a subject which has engaged, in an eminent degree, the attention of philosophers, both from the difficulty which was supposed to attend it, and from the extensive applications which were to be made of it, as the ground-work of every proposition, and, consequently, of all our knowledge. It was necessary, therefore, to give you a sketch of the great controversy as to Universals, that so long divided the schools, of which one party, that of the Realists,—formerly so powerful when the general theory of the primary mental functions of perception accorded with the Realism,—may now, when our theory of perception is too simple to accord with it, be considered as altogether extinct. It was scarcely possible that universal forms or species should continue to hold a place in the physiology of mind, or in our systems of dialectics, when even sensible species had been universally abandoned.

In stating the opinion on the subject of this con-

troversy, which I consider as the only one worthy of your assent, and indeed so obviously just that it seems to me as if it could scarcely have failed to occur to every mind, but for the darkness of insignificant terms and phrases with which the controversy itself had enveloped it,—I endeavoured to free it, as much as possible, from this mere verbal darkness, and to exhibit the process to you in that simple order of succession in which it appears to me to take place.

The process I stated to be the following:—

We perceive two or more objects: this is one state of the mind. We are struck with the feeling of their resemblance in certain respects. This is a second state of the mind. We then, in the third stage, give a name to these circumstances of felt resemblance, a name which is, of course, applied afterwards only where this relation of similarity is felt. It is unquestionably not the name which produces the feeling of resemblance, but the feeling of resemblance which leads to the invention or application of the name: for it would be equally just and philosophic to say that it is the name of the individual, John or William, which gives existence to the individual John or William, and that he was nobody, or nothing, till the name, which made him something, was given, as to say, that the name man, which includes both John and William, is that which constitutes our relative notion of the resemblance of John and William, expressed by their common appellatives; and that, but for the name, we could not have conceived them to have any common or similar properties,—that is to say, could not have had any general relative notion, or general idea, as it has been wrongly called, of human nature, of the respects in which John, William, and all other individual men agree. So far is the general



term from being essential to the rise of that state of mind which constitutes the feeling of resemblance, or, in other words, to the general notion, whatever it may be, which the term expresses, that it is only for a very small number of such general relative feelings that we have invented general terms. There are scarcely any two objects at which we can look without perceiving a resemblance of some sort; but we never think of giving a name to each pair of relatives, on account of some slight circumstance in which they may have been felt by us to agree, more than we think of giving a name to every separate individual object which we perceive—to every blade of grass in our fields, to every rose on a bush, or even to every rose-bush in our garden. It is necessary, for the convenience of social life, that we should have general terms to express the most important general resemblances; a general word, *man*, for example, to express briefly those very general circumstances of resemblance which we discover in all the individuals to whom that name is given, and thus to save us from the repetition of innumerable proper names, when we speak of circumstances common to the whole multitude. It is not necessary that we should have a general term to express, in like manner, every less extensive resemblance which we may discover in any two or more individual men; and, accordingly, for such minute resemblances we do not invent any general term: yet the feelings of resemblance, or notions of general circumstances of agreement, though they may be more or less important, so as to prompt in some cases, and not in other cases, to the use of a common appellative, are still in kind, as mere feelings of relation, the same, whether the general term for expressing them be invented or not; and feelings which arise as much when no name

is given as when a name is given, cannot surely be dependent on names that do not exist in the greater number of cases at all, and that, when they are formed, exist only after these very feelings which they are invented to express.

If our mind be capable of feeling resemblance, it must be capable of general notions, which are nothing more than varieties of this very feeling; for we surely cannot perceive objects to resemble each other, without perceiving them to resemble each other in certain respects rather than in others; and this very notion of the respects in which they are similar, is all that is meant by the general relative feeling.

The circumstances in which all individual men agree form my general notion of man, or human nature. When I use the term man, I employ it to express every being in whom these circumstances are to be found; that is to say, every being who excites, when considered together with the other beings whom I have before learned to rank as man, the same relative feeling of resemblance. When I hear the term man, these general circumstances of agreement occur to me vaguely, perhaps, and indistinctly, but probably as distinctly as the conception of the individual John or William, which recurs when I hear one of those names.

Indeed, there can be no doubt that the exact meaning of our general terms is much more distinctly conceived by us than that of our particular terms: that we have a far clearer notion of a line, for example, than of an inch or three-fourths of an inch; of rectilinear angles in general, as formed by any meeting of any two straight lines in any direction, than of an angle of sixty-five degrees, for which one particular inclination of the meeting lines is absolutely necessary; and an inclination, which only the nicest measurement

can discriminate, from that which forms an angle of sixty-four or of sixty-six. The general term, it is evident, in proportion as it is more and more general, involves the consideration of fewer particulars, and is, therefore, less confused; while the particular term must involve all the particulars included in the general one, with many more that distinguish the species or the individual, and that are difficult themselves to be distinguished, in consequence of the faintness of the limits in which they shadow into each other. To this it is owing that the sciences which are most strictly demonstrative, that is to say, the sciences in which our notions are the clearest, are not those which relate to particular objects, and which, consequently, involve particular conceptions and particular terms, but the sciences of number and quantity, in which every term is a general one, and every notion, therefore, which it expresses, general.

With each advance in generalizing, the general notion, or the feeling of resemblance in certain circumstances, becomes different, because the circumstances in which it is necessary that the general resemblance should be felt, are fewer, and common, therefore, to a greater number of objects; the general term being, in every stage, applicable to the whole number of objects which excite, when considered together, that relative feeling of similarity, the suggesting of which is all that constitutes the variety, species, genus, order, or class.

The words, *John*, *man*, *animal*, *substance*, in the progressive scale of generalisation, are words which I understand, and none of which I feel to be exactly synonymous with the others, but to express either less or more, so as to admit progressively of wider applications than could be allowed at a lower point of the scale. Since they are felt, then, not to be exactly



synonymous, each term, if it be understood at all, must excite in the mind a different feeling of some sort or other; and this different state of mind is nothing more than a notion of agreement in certain circumstances, more or fewer, according to the extent of the generalisation.

If, then, the generalizing process be, first, the perception or conception of two or more objects,—2dly, The relative feeling of their resemblance in certain respects,—3dly, The designation of these circumstances of resemblance, by an appropriate name,—the doctrine of the Nominalists, which includes only two of these stages—the perception of particular objects, and the invention of general terms—must be false, as excluding that relative suggestion of resemblance in certain respects, which is the second and most important step of the process; since it is this intermediate feeling alone that leads to the use of the term, which otherwise it would be impossible to limit to any set of objects. Accordingly, we found that, in their impossibility of accounting, on their own principles, for this limitation,—which it is yet absolutely necessary to explain in some manner or other,—the Nominalists, to explain it, uniformly take for granted the existence of those very general notions, which they at the same time profess to deny: that, while they affirm that we have no notion of a kind, species, or sort, independently of the general terms which denote them, they speak of our application of such terms only to objects of the same kind, species, or sort, as if we truly had some notions of these general circumstances of agreement, to direct us; and that they are thus very far from being Nominalists in the spirit of their argument, at the very moment, when they are Nominalists in assertion,—strenuous opposers of those very

general feelings, of the truth of which they avail themselves in their very endeavour to disprove them.

If, indeed, it were the name which formed the class, and not that previous relative feeling, or general notion of resemblance of some sort, which the name denotes, then might any thing be classed with any thing, and classed with equal propriety. All which would be necessary, would be merely to apply the same name uniformly to the same objects; and, if we were careful to do this, John and a triangle might as well be classed together, under the name man, as John and William. Why does the one of these arrangements appear to us more philosophic than the other? It is because something more is felt by us to be necessary in classification, than the mere giving of a name at random. There is, in the relative suggestion that arises on our very perception or conception of objects, when we consider them together, a reason for giving the generic name to one set of objects rather than to another: the name of a man, for instance, to John and William, rather than to John and a triangle. This reason is the feeling of the resemblance of the objects which we class: that general notion of the relation of similarity in certain respects, which is signified by the general term; and without which relative suggestion, as a previous state of the mind, the general term would as little have been invented, as the names of John and William would have been invented, if there had been no perception of any individual being whatever to be denoted by them.

That we have general relative feelings of the resemblances of objects, and that our general terms are significant of these, and limited, therefore, to the particular objects which excite some common feeling of resemblance, is then, I conceive, sufficiently evident:

and yet, the existence of such general notions is not merely rejected by the greater number of philosophers, but the assertion of it has been considered as a subject rather of ridicule than of any serious confutation, as if confutation itself would have been too great an honour.

I must confess, however, that some incautious expressions of the Conceptualists, and their erroneous analysis and classification of the general feeling, did justify in part this ridicule, as they involved an appearance of inconsistency and contradiction, which a more accurate analysis of the general feeling asserted, and a very slight change of phraseology and arrangement would have removed. These improprieties, it may be of importance to point out to you, as furnishing, perhaps, some explanation of the error of New Nominalism.

The use of the word idea for expressing the notion or feeling of resemblance, was, in the first place, unfortunate. Idea, from its etymological sense, and its common application to the conceptions of external objects, seems almost, in itself, to imply something which can be individualized, and offered to the senses. The general idea, therefore, which we are said to form, from the consideration of the various ways in which two lines can meet one another, seems to us, as an idea, to be something which we must be capable of representing in a diagram, like any of the particular angles considered by us; and what we can thus image in a diagram, must evidently be particular; so that, if we ascribe to it properties of more than one particular angle, our reference must, on this very account, seem to involve an inconsistency or multitude of inconsistencies. The general idea of an angle, therefore, which is not a right angle, nor acute nor



obtuse, but at once all of these, and none of them, is to our conception, in every respect, as truly absurd as a whole which is less than a part of itself, or a square of which the angles are together equal to four right angles, and at the same time equal to five such angles, and only to three or two.

Such are the inconsistencies that must always seem to flow from the use of the word *idea* in this case, as if presenting to us a particular image of what cannot be particular.

The same remark may, in a great measure, be applied to the use of the word *conception*, which also seems to individualize its object; and which, as commonly employed to signify some fainter revival of a past feeling, may lead, and has led, to very mistaken views of the nature of our general notions. In these, according to the process described by me, there is nothing which can be said to be in any respect a conception, or fainter transcript of the past; and, therefore, if I were to invent a name for the opinion with respect to universals which I hold, it would not be as a Conceptualist, but as a Notionist, or Relationist, that I should wish to be classed. The feeling of the relation of similarity is no part of the perception or conception of the separate objects which suggest it. It is a feeling of a different species, absolutely new—a relation, and nothing more; and the general term, which is not expressive of what can strictly be termed a conception, is invented only to express all that multitude of objects, which, however different in other respects, agree in exciting one common feeling of relation—the relation of a certain similarity.

The phrase, *general notion*, which is that which I have preferred, would in this case have been far more appropriate, and would have obviated that tendency

to individual representation, which the word *conception*, and still more, the word *idea*, produce; and consequently, all those apparent inconsistencies, which do not attend the notion of the mere feeling of agreement of various objects, but arise only from the attempt to form an individual representation of what is in itself general, and therefore, by its very nature, incapable of being individually represented.

Still more unfortunate, however, than the classing of our general notions with conceptions or ideas, was a verbal impropriety that may at first seem to you of little consequence,—the mere use of the indefinite article, in a case in which certainly it ought not to have been employed. It was not the mere general notion of the nature and properties of triangles, but the general idea of a triangle, of which writers on this branch of intellectual philosophy have been accustomed to speak. The influence of this improper use of the article has not before been remarked; yet I have no doubt that it is the very circumstance which has chiefly tended to produce a denial of the general notion itself. It is a striking lesson, how much the progress of philosophy may be retarded, even by the slightest inaccuracy of language, which leads those who consider the doctrine without due attention and analysis, to ascribe to it the inconsistencies which are not in the doctrine itself, and thus to reject, as absurd, what, in another form of expression, would perhaps have appeared to them almost self-evident.

According to the view which I have given you of the generalizing process, all that is truly general is, a relation that is felt by us. We have a feeling, or general notion, of the circumstances of agreement of many individual objects, but not a notion of an object uniting at once all the qualities of the individual

objects, and yet excluding every quality which distinguishes each from each. This would truly be a species of Realism still more absurd than the old scholastic universal *a parte rei*. The general idea of a man, who is neither dark nor fair, tall nor short, fat nor thin, nor of any degree intermediate between these extremes, and yet is, at the same time, dark and fair, tall and short, fat and thin, is that of which we may very safely deny the existence: for a man must be particular, and must therefore have particular qualities, and certainly cannot have qualities that are inconsistent. But a dark and a fair man, a tall and a short man, a fat and a thin man, all agree in certain respects, or, in other words, excite in us a certain relative feeling or notion of general resemblance; since, without a feeling of this kind, we never should have thought of classing them together under one general term. We have not a general idea of a man, but we are impressed with a certain common relation of similarity of all the individuals, whom, on that account, and on that account alone, we rank together under the common appellation of men.

A general idea of a man is, then, it will be allowed, an unfortunate, or, to speak more accurately, an absurd expression. But the absurdity of such an expression does not render it less absurd to deny, that we have any general notion or relative feeling whatever of the circumstances in which men agree,—that general notion which preceded the invention of the general term *man*, and without which the general term would be absolutely incapable of being limited or applied to one set of objects more than to another. Yet all the valuable remarks of Mr Locke, on this subject, have been neglected or forgotten; while one passage has been well remembered, and often quoted, because



nothing is so well remembered as the ridiculous. The passage, indeed, it must be confessed, is abundantly ridiculous; but what is ridiculous in it, arises, very evidently, from the source which I have pointed out, and not from the doctrine, that there is a general feeling, of some sort, corresponding with every general term that is not absolutely insignificant.

“Does it not require some pains and skill,” says Mr Locke, in this often-quoted passage—“does it not require some pains and skill to form the general idea of a triangle, (which is yet none of the most abstract, comprehensive, and difficult;) for it must be neither oblique, nor rectangle, neither equilateral, equicrural, nor scalenon; but all and none of these at once. In effect, it is something imperfect that cannot exist; an idea, wherein some parts of several different and inconsistent ideas are put together.”<sup>1</sup>

Of this strange description, so unworthy of its great author, and I may add, so unworthy also of the doctrine which he supported, the authors of the *Memoirs of Scriblerus* have not failed to avail themselves, converting Mr Locke’s universal triangle into an universal lord mayor.

“Martin supposed an universal man to be like a knight of a shire, or a burgess of a corporation, that represented a great many individuals. His father asked him, if he could not frame the idea of an universal lord mayor? Martin told him, that, never having seen but one lord mayor, the idea of that lord mayor always returned to his mind; that he had great difficulty to abstract a lord mayor from his fur-gown and gold chain; nay, that the horse he saw the lord mayor ride upon not a little disturbed his imagination. On the other hand, Crambe, to show himself of a more penetrating genius, swore that he could frame a con-

<sup>1</sup> Essay concerning Human Understanding, B. IV. c. vii. sect. 9.



viously existing; that is to say, we limit it to objects which agree in exciting this relative suggestion. It is hence the very nature of our general notion not to be particular; for who can paint or particularize a mere relation? It is the feeling of resemblance which constitutes it, not the objects themselves which are felt to be similar; and to require, therefore, that our mental notion of the common properties of triangles, scalene, equilateral, and isosceles, should itself be a triangle, equilateral, isosceles, or scalene, is not more philosophic, or, I may say, even not less absurd, than it would be to require of us a visual delineation of a sound or a smell, and to deny that we have any sensations of melody and odour because we cannot represent these in pictures to the eye.

I have already remarked, that it is only for a small number of the resemblances which we perceive in objects that we have invented general terms. The general term, therefore, far from being essential to the generalisation, is only a record of a generalisation previously made. It marks what we have felt, and enables us to refer, with exactness, to this past feeling.

When I speak of our invention of a general term, however, I speak of what we do, in the present mature state of our language, not of what was likely to take place in the early generalisations of savage life; for there seems to me very little reason to doubt the justness of that theory of appellatives, which is hinted, indeed, in some earlier writers, but has been particularly maintained by Condillac and Dr Smith,—a theory which supposes the words now used as appellatives, to have been originally the proper names of individual objects, extended to the objects that were perceived to be similar to those to which the name had primarily been



given. The theory is stated with great force by Dr Smith, in the ingenious dissertation appended to his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. It would be injustice to his opinion, to attempt to express it in any words but his own.

“The assignation of particular names, to denote particular objects, that is, the institution of nouns substantive, would probably be one of the first steps towards the formation of language. Two savages, who had never been taught to speak, but had been bred up remote from the societies of men, would naturally begin to form that language by which they would endeavour to make their mutual wants intelligible to each other, by uttering certain sounds, whenever they meant to denote certain objects. Those objects only which were most familiar to them, and which they had most frequent occasion to mention, would have particular names assigned to them. The particular cave whose covering sheltered them from the weather, the particular tree whose fruit relieved their hunger, the particular fountain whose water allayed their thirst, would first be denominated by the words cave, tree, fountain, or by whatever other appellations they might think proper, in that primitive jargon, to mark them. Afterwards, when the more enlarged experience of these savages had led them to observe, and their necessary occasions obliged them to make mention of other caves, and other trees, and other fountains, they would naturally bestow upon each of those new objects the same name by which they had been accustomed to express the similar object they were first acquainted with. The new objects had none of them any name of its own, but each of them exactly resembled another object which had such an appellation. It was impossible that those savages could

behold the new objects without recollecting the old ones; and the name of the old ones, to which the new bore so close a resemblance. When they had occasion, therefore, to mention, or to point out to each other, any of the new objects, they would naturally utter the name of the correspondent old one, of which the idea could not fail, at that instant, to present itself to their memory in the strongest and liveliest manner. And thus, those words, which were originally the proper names of individuals, would each of them insensibly become the common name of a multitude. A child that is just learning to speak, calls every person who comes to the house its papa, or its mamma; and thus bestows upon the whole species those names which it had been taught to apply to two individuals. I have known a clown who did not know the proper name of the river which ran by his own door. It was the river, he said, and he never heard any other name for it. His experience, it seems, had not led him to observe any other river. The general word river, therefore, was, it is evident, in his acceptance of it, a proper name, signifying an individual object. If this person had been carried to another river, would he not readily have called it a river? Could we suppose any person living on the banks of the Thames so ignorant, as not to know the general word river, but to be acquainted only with the particular word Thames, if he was brought to any other river, would he not readily call it a Thames? This, in reality, is no more than what they, who are well acquainted with the general word, are very apt to do. An Englishman, describing any great river which he may have seen in some foreign country, naturally says, that it is another Thames. The Spaniards, when they first arrived upon the coast of Mexico, and observed

the wealth, populousness, and habitations of that fine country, so much superior to the savage nations which they had been visiting for some time before, cried out, that it was another Spain. Hence it was called New Spain, and this name has stuck to that unfortunate country ever since. We say, in the same manner, of a hero, that he is an Alexander; of an orator, that he is a Cicero; of a philosopher, that he is a Newton. This way of speaking, which the grammarians called an *Antonomasia*, and which is still extremely common, though now not at all necessary, demonstrates how much mankind are naturally disposed to give to one object the name of any other which nearly resembles it, and thus to denominate a multitude by what originally was intended to express an individual.

“It is this application of the name of an individual to a great multitude of objects, whose resemblance naturally recalls the idea of that individual, and of the name which expresses it, that seems originally to have given occasion to the formation of those classes and assortments, which, in the schools, are called *genera* and *species*.”<sup>1</sup>

That the first designation of species and genera, by appellatives, was nothing more than this ingenious speculation supposes it to have been,—the extension of mere proper names from similar objects to similar objects, I have very little doubt. But still, it must be remembered, that the extension was from similar objects to objects felt to be similar; that, before the extension, therefore, there must have been a general notion of the circumstances of resemblance; and that, without this intermediate feeling of his mind, the savage would as little have thought of calling one tree

<sup>1</sup> Smith's *Considerations concerning the First Formation of Languages*, from the beginning.



by the name which he had previously given to another tree, as he would have thought of extending this name to the cave which sheltered him, or the fountain at which he quenched his thirst. In short, whatever our theory of the origin of general terms may be, it either must take for granted the previous existence of general relative notions, corresponding with them, or it must suppose that the terms were invented at random, without any reason whatever, to guide us in our application or limitation of them. To state any reason of this kind, is to state some general resemblance that is felt by us, and consequently some notion of general circumstances of resemblance, which must be independent of the general term, because it is prior to it. This, which the Nominalist, on reflection, I should conceive, must admit, is all for which the Conceptualist contends, or at least, is all for which I contend, in that view of the generalizing process which I have given you.

The decision of the controversy might, indeed, as I have now said, be very safely trusted to the Nominalist himself, if he would only put a single question to his own mind, and reflect for a few moments before giving an answer. Why do I class together certain objects, and exclude certain others from the class which I have formed? He must say, either that he classes them together because he has classed them together, and that he excludes the others because he excludes them, which is surely not a very philosophic answer, though it is all which can be understood in the assertion, that it is the name which constitutes as well as defines the genus; or he must say, that there is some reason which has led him to give the general name to certain objects and not to certain others. The reason for which the name is given, must, of

course, be something which is felt prior to the giving of the name, and independent of it; and the only reason which can be conceived is, that certain objects have a resemblance which certain other objects do not partake, and that the general name is therefore invented to express the objects which agree in exciting this common notion of relation. Before the name was invented, therefore, there must have been a feeling of circumstances of resemblance, common to certain individuals,—a feeling, which is neither the perception that precedes it, nor the name which follows it, but a state of mind intervening between the perception of the separate objects, and the verbal designation of them, as a species or genus. In short, it is that general relative suggestion, or general notion of resemblance, on which we must admit our classifications to be founded, or contend that they are founded upon nothing.

Since all reasoning implies some generalisation, the Nominalist, who allows nothing general but terms, is of course led, or forced, by his theory, to deny the possibility of reasoning of any kind without the aid of general terms; a denial which seems to me one of the boldest, because the least consistent with the observed facts, which it is possible either for dogmatism or scepticism to make; as if the infant, long before he can be supposed to have acquired any knowledge of terms, did not form his little reasonings on the subjects, on which it is important for him to reason, as accurately probably as afterwards; but, at least, with all the accuracy which is necessary for preserving his existence, and gratifying his few feeble desires. He has, indeed, even then, gone through processes which are admitted to involve the finest reasoning, by those very philosophers who deny him to be capable of

reasoning at all. He has already calculated distances, long before he knew the use of a single word expressive of distance, and accommodated his induction to those general laws of matter, of which he knows nothing but the simple facts, and his expectation that what has afforded him either pain or pleasure will continue to afford him pain or pleasure. What language does the infant require, to prevent him from putting his finger twice in the flame of that candle which has burned him once? or to persuade him to stretch his hand, in exact conformity with the laws of optics, to that very point at which some bright trinket is glittering on his delighted eyes? To suppose that we cannot reason without language, seems to me, indeed, almost to involve the same inconsistency as to say, that man is incapable of moving his limbs till he have previously walked a mile.

The use of general terms is not to enable man to reason, but to enable him to reason well. They fix the steps of our progress; they give us the power of availing ourselves, with confidence, of our own past reasonings, and of the reasonings of others; they do not absolutely prevent us from wandering, but they prevent us from wandering very far, and are marks of direction to which we can return: without them we should be like travellers journeying on an immense plain, without a track, and without any points in the sky to determine whether we were continuing to move east or west, or north or south. We should still be moving, indeed, and each step would be a progress, if it were compared merely with the step that went before. But there could be no long journey onwards; and, after years of wandering, we might, perhaps, return to the very spot from which we set out, without



even so much knowledge as to have the slightest guess that we were again where we had been before.

To drop this allegory, however, it is very evident, that though we should be capable of reasoning even without language of any sort, and of reasoning sufficient to protect ourselves from obvious and familiar causes of injury, our reasonings, in such circumstances, must be very limited, and as little comparable to the reasoning of him who enjoys the advantage of all the nice distinctions of a refined language, as the creeping of the diminutive insect to the soaring of the eagle. Both animals, indeed, are capable of advancing; but the one passes from cloud to cloud almost with the rapidity of the lightning, which is afterwards to flash from them, and the other takes half a day to move over the few shrunk fibres of a withered leaf.

What must be the arithmetic of that people in South America of whom Condamine tells us, whose whole numeration did not extend beyond three, and who had no resource afterwards but to point first to their fingers and then to their hair! What the reasonings of arithmetic would be to such a people every other species of reasoning would be to us, if our general vocabulary bore no greater proportion to the feelings that were to be expressed by it, than this very limited numeral vocabulary, to all the possible combinations of numbers!

The extent of error into which we should be likely to fall, in our classifications and reasonings in general, if our language were of this very imperfect kind, it is, of course, impossible for us, in our present circumstances, to guess; though we may derive some assistance, in our estimation of these possible absurdities, from facts of which voyagers occasionally tell us. I may take, for an example, a fact mentioned by Cap-

tain Cook, in describing the people of Wateoo, a small island on which he lighted in his voyage from New Zealand to the Friendly Islands. "The inhabitants," he says, "were afraid to come near our cows and horses, nor did they form the least conception of their nature. But the sheep and goats did not surpass the limits of their ideas; for they gave us to understand that they knew them to be birds." "It will appear rather incredible," he adds, "that human ignorance could ever make so strange a mistake, there not being the most distant similitude between a sheep or goat and any winged animal. But these people seemed to know nothing of the existence of any other land animals besides hogs, dogs, and birds. Our sheep and goats, they could see, were very different creatures from the two first; and therefore, they inferred that they must belong to the latter class, in which they knew that there is a considerable variety of species." "I would add," says Mr Stewart, who quotes this very striking fact, together with the judicious remark of Cook,— "I would add, that the mistake of these islanders perhaps did not arise from their considering a sheep or goat as bearing a more striking resemblance to a bird than to the two classes of quadrupeds with which they were acquainted, but from the want of a generic word, such as quadruped, comprehending these two species; which men in their situation would no more be led to form, than a person who had seen only one individual of each species would think of an appellative to express both, instead of applying a proper name to each. In consequence of the variety of birds, it appears that they had a generic name comprehending all of them, to which it was not unnatural for them to refer any new animal they met with."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Stewart's Elements, Part II. c. iv. sect. 1.

The observation of Mr Stewart, with respect to the influence of a generic name on this seemingly very strange arrangement of these very rude zoologists, is ingenious and just. It must be remembered, however, in opposition to his general doctrine on the subject, that the application of the generic term, even in this very strange manner, is a proof, not that we are without general notions, but that we truly have general notions that are independent of the mere terms which express them. It was not merely because they had a generic term that they extended this term to the unknown sheep and goats, but because the sheep and goats coincided, in some measure, with the general notion expressed by the general term. Of this the most striking evidence is contained in the very statement of Captain Cook. The cows and horses, sheep and goats, were all equally unknown to the islanders. Why, then, did they not class the cows and horses with birds as much as the goats and sheep? As far as the mere possession of a generic word could have led to this application—if a word alone were necessary—it was common to all the new cases alike. When all these were equally unknown, there must have been some previous general notion of certain circumstances of resemblance in birds, with which the goats and sheep coincided more exactly than the cows and horses. Nor is it very difficult to guess what this previous notion was: The bulk of the different animals must have led to the distinction. The winged tribes with which they were acquainted, though they might perhaps approach in some slight degree to the stature of the smaller quadrupeds, could have no resemblance in this respect to the horses and cows. A bird, in their mental definition of it, was certainly a living thing, of certain various sizes familiar to them, and not a dog



or a hog. A sheep or a goat was seen by them to be a living thing, not a dog nor a hog, and of a size that implied no remarkable opposition to that involved in their silent mental definition of a bird. In such circumstances, it was classed by them as a bird, with as much accuracy as is to be found in many of our systematic references, even in the present improved state of science and natural history,—in that, for example, which classes and ranks, under one word, the whale that swims with the man that walks; or, to use a case still more analogous, even the ant that creeps with the gnat that flies,—and, with equal accuracy, they excluded the cows and horses that did not coincide with the general notion, of which a certain resemblance of size formed an essential part. The extension of the term to the one set of quadrupeds, and the exclusion of the other set, must have had some reason; and this reason, whatever it may have been, must have been some general feeling of resemblance of some sort,—a relative suggestion, intervening between the perception of the animals and the application of the term.

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## LECTURE XLVIII.

### *Analysis of the Process of Reasoning.*

GENTLEMEN, my last Lecture brought to a conclusion the remarks which I had to offer on that very interesting tribe of our suggestions of relation which constitute the feelings of resemblance: a tribe on the existence of which, as we have seen, all classification depends, and in a great measure the whole power of language, as an instrument or medium either of dis-

tinct thought in the mind of the individual, or of reciprocal communication of thought from mind to mind.

The examination of this species of relation led us into one of the most memorable controversies in the whole science of Intellectual Philosophy; and though I knew well that there could be no reason to fear your adoption of the absurdities of Realism, and, therefore, did not think it necessary to occupy your time with any serious confutation of that obsolete hypothesis, I knew also too well the prevailing influence of the opposite error of Nominalism, and the high authorities which sanction it, not to think it necessary to put you fully on your guard against the fallacy of this system, by showing you how incomplete it is, and, therefore, how unfit to be adopted as a narrative of the actual Process of Generalisation.

This process I described, as involving, not two stages only, as the Nominalists contend, but three. In the first place, the perception or conception of the two or more external objects, or the conception of the two or more internal feelings that are afterwards classed together; in the second place, the feeling or general relative notion of the resemblance, which these separate objects bear to each other, in certain respects, the relative suggestion, in consequence of which alone we are led to class them together; in the third place, the expression of this felt general resemblance, by a general term, as significant of that silent mental generalisation which has already classed them together. The mental generalizing may, indeed, be considered as complete, before the invention of the general term; the term being of use only as fixing and recording, or conveying to others the knowledge of that general notion or feeling of resemblance which preceded the first use of the general word.

At the same time, however, that I exhibited to you, as simply and forcibly as the complex nature of the process would allow me, the doctrine of general notions, as distinct mental affections of a peculiar species, arising from that susceptibility of the mind by which we perceive, together with various other relations, the relations that constitute the resemblances of objects,—I took occasion to point out to you some errors of thought, and consequent improprieties of arrangement and expression, on the part of the Conceptualists, which I regarded as having had the chief effect in preventing the universal and ready adoption of this doctrine of the threefold nature of the process, as consisting in perceptions, relations, and verbal signs; a doctrine which, but for the almost universal prevalence of the opposite system of Nominalism, would have appeared to me to stand little in need of any argument in its support: since the fact of the extension of general terms only to certain objects, to the exclusion of others, seems, of itself, sufficiently to show that there is a certain general notion of resemblance, a peculiar state of mind, intervening between the primary perceptions, and the use of the general term, which forms, as it were, the measure of adjustment of the particular objects, that are arranged in the same class, if they agree with this general notion, and excluded, if they do not agree with it. An arrangement, without some principle of resemblance to direct the order in which objects are placed, seems to me absolutely unworthy of the name of an arrangement, and certainly could be but of very little aid to the memory, even if it could be of any advantage to remember divisions and subdivisions that were founded upon nothing. The classifications which our dictionaries form, according to the





ascribing it to these distinguished philosophers, however, I speak of it only as it is clearly developed by them; for there are many hints of the same opinion to be found in works of an earlier date. The speculation to which I allude, is that which supposes the proper names of individual objects to have become appellatives of a whole class, by extension from similar objects to similar—the principle, which could not fail to operate in this way, being a principle which still continues to operate even in the common phraseology of the most common minds—though, by rhetoricians, whose art is, in a great measure, the art of making common things mysterious, it has been advanced to the dignity of a figure of speech.

The brief expression or result of the feeling of resemblance is a general term; but when all which we feel, in our relative suggestions of resemblance, or in any other of our relative suggestions, is enunciated in language, it is termed a proposition, which, notwithstanding the air of mystery that invests it in our books of logic, is the expression of this common feeling of relation, and nothing more. The word *animal*, for example, is a general term, expressive of a particular relation of resemblance that is felt by us. A horse is an animal, is a proposition, which is merely a brief expression of this felt resemblance of a horse to various other creatures included by us in the general term. It is the same in all the other species of relations which we are capable of feeling. In the relation of position, for example, when we say that the planet Mercury is that which is next to the sun, our mere feeling of the local relation,—that particular relative suggestion which arises on the consideration of the sun, together with its planetary attendants,—by this expression of it in words, becomes, what is termed in logic, a pro-

position. In the relative suggestion of degree, to say that gold is heavier than copper; in the relative suggestion of proportion, to say, that four are to twenty, as twenty to a hundred; in the relative suggestion of comprehension, to say, that there is a portion of lead even in the coldest snow, is to state, as a proposition, what in the mind itself, is the mere feeling of a certain relation. In all such cases, it is very evident that the verbal statement of the proposition does not alter the nature of the relative suggestion, or feeling of a relation, which it expresses, but simply expresses to others a relation that must have been felt, before the proposition could be framed; that it is not the word *general*, for example, which produces the feeling of the general resemblance of those various beings which we have classed together under that term; nor the word *heavier*, which makes us feel the greater pressure of a piece of gold, than of an equal bulk of copper. But those feelings, previously existing, which are due to the verbal proposition that expresses to others those previous feelings. To insist on a distinction so obvious, seems to me, indeed, almost as if I were labouring to prove what it would be impossible for any one to deny. But if you reflect on the influence of the doctrine of the Nominalists, with respect to general terms, as constituting all that can be said to be general in reasoning, you will perceive how necessary it is, that you should be fully impressed with the priority of the relative feeling involved in each proposition, to the proposition which expresses it,—and its consequent independence of those forms of language which render it capable of being communicated to other minds, but do not alter its nature, as a feeling of that particular mind in which it has previously arisen.



The proposition being only an expression of a relation of some kind or other, which has been previously felt, may, of course, be as various as the species of relative suggestions of which our minds are susceptible. There may be, as we have seen, propositions of resemblance, of order, of degree, of proportion, of comprehension; to which last class, indeed—that class which includes all the relations of a whole to its parts—the others, as I have already remarked, may, by a little effort of subtilty, be reduced; since every affirmative proposition enunciates or predicates—to use the technical word—some quality or attribute of a subject, which may be said to form a part of the very essence of the subject itself, or, at least, of our complex notion of the subject. The one quality, of which we speak, is comprehended with other qualities in that general aggregate to which we state it to belong.

On this class of our relative suggestions, therefore,—that which involves the feeling of the relation of the parts comprehended to the comprehending whole,—it will be necessary to bestow a little fuller illustration, that you may understand clearly the nature of the process of reasoning—that most important of all our mental processes—which logicians and metaphysicians have contrived to render so obscure, but which is in itself nothing more than a series of felt relations of this particular class in the instances which I selected before, of a house and its apartments; a tree and its stems and foliage; a horse, and its head, and limbs, and trunk. The relation which I have termed the relation of comprehension, or comprehensiveness, is so very obvious, that a mere allusion to it is sufficient, without any commentary. In these cases, the parts, which together form the whole, are truly substances

that admit of being separated, and can as easily be conceived to exist separately as together.

But substances are not conceived by us only as composed of certain elementary substances, which constitute them, by their mere juxtaposition, in apparent contiguity, and which may exist apart, after division. They are also conceived by us as subjects of qualities which co-exist in them, and which cannot exist apart, or, in other words—for the qualities of substances, as perceived by us, are nothing more—they are capable of affecting us as sentient beings, directly or indirectly, in various ways. A flake of snow, for example, is composed of particles of snow, which may exist separately; and this composition of separate particles in seeming coherence, is one species of totality; but the same snow, without any integral division, may be considered by us as possessing various qualities, that is to say, is capable of affecting us variously. It is cold, that is to say, it excites in us a sensation of chillness; it is white, that is to say, it produces in our mind a peculiar sensation of vision, by the light which it reflects to us; it has weight—is of a certain crystalline regularity of figure—is soft or hard, according as it is more or less compressed—liquefiable at a very low temperature—and my conception of snow is of that permanent subject which affects my senses in these various ways. The conglomerated flakes in a snow-ball are not more distinctly parts of the mass itself, which we consider, than the coldness, whiteness, gravity, regular form, softness or hardness, and ready fusibility, are felt to be parts of our complex notion of snow, as a substance.

When I think of cases, in which the relation is of a substance to parts that are themselves substances—as when I say, that a room is a part of a house, or

that a tree has branches—it is quite evident that in these very simple propositions I merely state the relation of parts to a comprehending whole. But is the statement at all different in kind, when I speak, in the common forms of a proposition, of the qualities of objects, when I say, for example, that snow is white, man capable of reasoning, the wisest of mankind still fallible? Do I not merely state one of the many qualities comprehended in that totality of qualities, which constitutes the subject as known to me? I do not indeed divide a mass into integral parts, but I divide a complex notion into its parts, or at least separate from that complexity a quality which I feel to belong, and state to belong, to that whole complex notion from which I have detached it. It is as it were a little analysis and synthesis. I decompose, and, in expressing verbally to others the mental decomposition which I have made, I combine again the separated elements of my thought; not, indeed, in the same manner, for the analytic process is as different as matter is from mind, but with the same feeling of agreement or identity which rises in the mind of a chemist when he has reduced to one mass the very elements into which he had previously transmuted the mass, by some one of the analyses of his wonderful art.

What, then, is reasoning—which is nothing more than a number of propositions, though of propositions consecutive in a certain order—but a continued series of analytic operations of this kind, developing the elements of our thought? In every proposition, that which is affirmed is a part of that of which it is affirmed; and the proposition, however technical its language may be, expresses only the single feeling of this relation. When I say snow is white, I state one of the many feelings which constitute my complex notion of snow. When I say man



is fallible. I state one of the many imperfections which, as conceived by me, together with many better qualities, constitute my complex notion of man. These statements of one particular relation are simple propositions, in each of which a certain analysis is involved. But, when I reason, or add proposition to proposition in a certain series, I merely prosecute my analysis, and prosecute it more or less minutely, according to the length of the ratiocination. When I say man is fallible, I state a quality involved in the nature of man, as any other part of an aggregate is involved in any other comprehending whole. When I add, he may therefore err, even when he thinks himself least exposed to error, I state what is involved in the notion of his fallibility. When I say, he therefore must not expect that all men will think as he does, even on points which appear to him to have no obscurity, I state that which is involved in the possibility of his and their erring even on such points. When I say, that he therefore should not dare to punish those who merely differ from him, and who may be right even in differing from him, I state what is involved in the absurdity of the expectation, that all men should think as he does. And when I say, that any particular legislative act of intolerance is as unjust as it is absurd, I state only what is involved in the impropriety of attempting to punish those who have no other guilt than that of differing in opinion from others, who are confessedly of a nature as fallible as their own.

In all this reasoning, though composed of many propositions, there is obviously only a progressive analysis, with a feeling, at each step, of the relation of parts to the whole, the predicate of each proposition being the subject of a new analysis in the proposition which follows it. Man is fallible. He who is fallible may

err, even when he thinks himself least exposed to error. He who may be in error, even when he thinks himself safest from it, ought not to be astonished that others should think differently from him, even on points which may seem to him perfectly clear; and thus, successively, through the whole ratiocination, the predicate becomes in its turn a subject of new analysis till we arrive at the last proposition, which is immediately extended backwards to the primary subject of analysis, man,—as involved in that which is itself involved in that primary complex conception, or aggregate of many qualities. There are minds, perhaps, which, merely by considering man, and opinion, and punishment, would discover, without one intervening proposition, that fallible man ought not to set himself up in judgment as a punisher of the speculative errors of fallible man: there are others, perhaps, who might not perceive the conclusion, without the whole series of propositions enumerated, though the conclusion is involved, as an element, in the first proposition—man is fallible; and according as the particular intellect is more or less acute, more or fewer of the intervening propositions will be necessary.

In every such case of continued intellectual analysis, it is impossible for us not to feel when we have arrived at the conclusion, that the last proposition is as truly contained in the first as any of the intervening propositions, though it is not seen by us till exhibited, as it were, in its elementary state, by the repetition of analysis after analysis. It is, in this respect, precisely like the decompositions of chemical analysis, which are constantly showing us something new, in the very substances which we carry about with us, or in those which are every moment before our eyes. The air, for example, after being long considered as

simple, in the sense in which chemists use that term, is afterwards shown to be composed of different gaseous fluids ; nor are even these regarded as simple, but each is believed to be composed of a certain base and the matter of heat ; and it is impossible to predict, or even to guess, what future analyses may be made even of these elements. Yet the atmosphere, now considered as compound, is, in kind, the same air which was continually flowing around the earth before this analysis ; and, in the mere animal function of respiration, all mankind had, from the first moment of their infant breath, been incessantly employed in separating, into its constituent parts, the very substance which they considered as incapable of division. The last chemist, whose labours, when this scene of earthly things is to perish, are to close the long toils of his predecessors, will perhaps regard scarcely a single substance in nature in the same light in which we now regard it ; and yet it is evident that the same terrestrial objects, which now meet our eyes, must continually have been present to his sight ;—the same seasons presenting the same herbage and flowers and fruits to the same races of animals,—to which, indeed, he may have given different names, or may have detected in them new elements, or proportions of elements, but of which all his arrangements and analyses are incapable of altering the nature.

In the truths of reasoning, which a profound and penetrating genius is able in like manner to exhibit to us, we perceive a similar analysis, which presents to us, as it were, the elements of our own former conceptions ; since the very reasoning, if it be at all intelligible, must begin with some conception already familiar to us in which it asserts something to be contained, and proceeds only by tracing similar relations. A new



truth, of this kind, is not so much added to us, therefore, as evolved from the primary truth already familiar. It is not as if new objects were presented to us, to be seen, but as if our intellectual senses—if I may venture to use that expression—were quickened and rendered more acute, so as to perceive clearly what we saw dimly, or not even dimly before, though we might have seen it as now, if we had not been too dull of vision to perceive what was in our very hands. The truths at which we arrive, by repeated intellectual analysis, may be said to resemble the miniature plant, which is to be found enclosed in that which is itself enclosed in the bulb or seed which we dissect. We must carry on our dissection, more and more minutely, to arrive at each new germ; but we do arrive at one after the other; and when our dissection is obliged to stop, we have reason to suppose, that still finer instruments, and still finer eyes, might prosecute the discovery almost to infinity. It is the same in the discovery of the truths of reasoning. The stage at which one inquirer stops, is not the limit of analysis, in reference to the object, but the limit of the analytic power of the individual. Inquirer after inquirer discovers truths which were involved in truths formerly admitted by us, without our being able to perceive what was comprehended in our admission. It is not absolutely absurd to suppose, that whole sciences may be contained in propositions that now seem to us so simple as scarcely to be susceptible of further analysis, but which hereafter, when developed by some more penetrating genius, may, without any change in external nature, present to man a new field of wonder and of power. Of the possibility of this, the mathematical sciences furnish a most striking example. The rudest peasant may be said to have in his mind all, or nearly

all, those primary notions, of which the sublimest demonstrations of the relations of number and quantity are the mere development. He would be astonished, indeed, if he could be made to understand, that on notions, which appear to him of so very trifling import, have been founded some of the proudest monuments of the intellectual achievements of man, and that, among the names to which his country and the world look with the highest veneration, are the names of those whose life has been occupied in little more than in tracing all the forms of which those few conceptions, which exist in his mind as much as in theirs, are susceptible. What geometry and arithmetic are to his rude notions of numbers and magnitudes, and proportions, some other sciences unknown to us, indeed, at present, but not more unknown to us than geometry and arithmetic are now to him, may be, in relation to conceptions which exist, and perhaps have long existed in our mind, but which we have not yet evolved into any of their important elements. As man is quicker or slower in this internal analysis, the progress of all that philosophy which depends on mere reasoning is more or less rapid. There may be races of beings, or at least we can conceive races of beings whose senses would enable them to perceive the ultimate embryo plant, enclosed in its innumerable series of preceding germs; and there may, perhaps, be created powers of some high order, as we know that there is one Eternal Power, able to feel, in a single comprehensive thought, all those truths, of which the generations of mankind are able, by successive analyses, to discover only a few, that are, perhaps, to the great truths which they contain, only as the flower which is blossoming before us is to that infinity of future blossoms enveloped in

it, with which, in ever renovated beauty, it is to adorn the summers of other ages.

"Lo! on each seed, within its slender rind,  
Life's golden threads in endless circles wind;  
Maze within maze the lucid webs are roll'd,  
And, as they burst, the living flame unfold.  
The pulpy acorn, ere it swells, contains  
The oak's vast branches in its milky veins,  
Each ravel'd bud, fine film, and fibre-line,  
Traced with nice pencil on the small design,  
The young Narcissus, in its bulb compress'd,  
Cradles a second nestling on its breast,  
In whose fine arms a younger embryo lies,  
Folds its thin leaves, and shuts its floret-eyes;  
Grain within grain successive harvests dwell,  
And boundless forests slumber in a shell."<sup>1</sup>

Such, too, perhaps, are the boundless truths that may be slumbering in a single comprehensive relation at present felt by us. The evolutions of thought, however, in our processes of reasoning, though in one respect they may be said to resemble the evolution of organic germs, have this noble distinction, that, if their progress be unobstructed, the progress itself is constant improvement. We have no reason to believe that the earth, after the longest succession of the ages during which it is to exist, will, at least without some new exertion of the power of its Creator, exhibit any races of organized beings different from those which it now pours out on its surface, or supports and feeds. But, when thought rises from thought, in intellectual evolution, the thought which *rises* is not a mere copy of the thought from which it rose, but a truth which was before unknown and unsuspected, that may be added to the increasing stores of human wisdom, and which, in addition to its own importance, is the pre-

<sup>1</sup> Darwin's Botanic Garden, Canto IV. v. 381-394.



sage, and almost the promise, of other truths which it is to evolve in like manner.

Every truth, indeed, at which we arrive in our reasoning, becomes thus far more than doubly valuable, for the field of fresh discoveries to which it may be opening a track: the facility of new analyses, after each preceding analysis, increasing, as this great field opens more and more on our view, with a wider range of objects,—stimulating at once, and justifying the hopes, which, in the language of Akenside,

“urge us on,  
With unremitted labour, to pursue  
Those sacred stores, that wait the ripening soul,  
In Truth's exhaustless bosom.”<sup>1</sup>

If the profoundest reasonings, then, as we have seen, be nothing more than a continued analysis of our thought, stating at every step what is contained in conceptions that previously existed as complex feelings of our mind, it may, on first reflection, seem extraordinary, when we consider the important truths which have been thus afforded to us, that we should have been able previously to form opinions, which involve these important truths afterwards detected in them, without having at the time the slightest knowledge, or even the slightest suspicion, that any such truths were contained in the general notions and general phraseology which we formed. But the reason of this is sufficiently obvious, when we attend to the nature and order of the process of generalisation, the results of which are the subjects of this consecutive analysis. If, indeed, we had advanced, in regular progress, from the less to the more general, from individuals to species, from species to genera, and thus

<sup>1</sup> Pleasures of Imagination, B. I. v. 241-244.

gradually upward, since we should then have known previously the minute specific circumstances involved in the higher orders and classes to which we had gradually ascended, it might have been absurd to suppose that these specific circumstances, previously known, could be discovered to us by analysis. The mode in which we generalize, is, however, very different. In our systematic tables, indeed, if we were to judge from these only, we might seem to have a regular advance from individuals to classes, through species, genera, orders. But, in the actual process of generalizing, we form classes and orders before we distinguish the minuter varieties. We are struck first with some resemblance of a multitude of objects, perhaps a very remote one, in consequence of which we class them together, and we attend afterwards to the differences which distinguish them, separating them into genera and species according to these differences. Every general term which we use, must express, indeed, an agreement of some sort, that has led us to invent and apply the term; but we may feel one resemblance, without feeling, or even suspecting other resemblances as real; and the very circumstance of agreement which we perceive, at the time when we class objects together as related, may involve, or comprehend, certain circumstances to which we then paid no attention, and which occur to us only in that intellectual analysis of ratiocination of which I spoke. It is as if we knew the situation and bearings of all the great cities in Europe, and could lay down, with most accurate precision, their longitude and latitude. To know this much, is to know that a certain space must intervene between them, but it is not to know what that space contains. The process of reasoning, in the discoveries which it gives, is like that topographic

inquiry which slowly fills up the intervals of our map, placing here a forest, there a long extent of plains, and beyond them a still longer range of mountains, till we see, at last, innumerable objects connected with each other, in that space which before presented to us only a few points of mutual bearing. The extent of space, indeed, is still precisely the same, and Paris, Vienna, and London, are to each other what they were before. The only difference is, that we know what is contained, or a part, at least, of what is contained, in the long lines that connect them.

The reasoning which proceeds from the complex to the less complex, detecting, at each stage, some unsuspected element of our thought, may be termed strictly *analytic reasoning*: the relation involved in each separate proposition of the series, being simply, as we have seen, the relation of parts to the whole. It is exactly the same relation, however, which is felt in reasonings that seem to proceed in an opposite way, exhibiting to us, not the whole first, and then some element of that whole, but first the elements, and then the whole which they compose. When we say, five and eight added together make thirteen, and when we say thirteen may be divided into eight and five, we express equally the comprehension of eight and five in thirteen, which is all that is felt by us in that particular proposition. Every synthesis, therefore, as much as its corresponding analysis, since one relation alone is developed at every step, implies the same elementary consideration of a whole and its parts; the difference being merely in the order of the propositions, not in the nature of the feeling of relation involved in any one of the separate propositions.

To this relation of comprehension, or the relation of a whole and its parts, I have said, the other rela-



tions of co-existence, in all the propositions which express them, might, in strictness of analysis, be reduced; even that relation of proportion which is of such importance in the reasonings of geometry and arithmetic; so that every species of reasoning would be, in the strictest sense of the word, analytical, evolving only qualities essential to the very nature of the subjects of the different proportions. When, therefore, in developing one of the relations of proportion, I say, four are to five as sixteen to twenty, I state a relation of the number four, which may be regarded as comprehended in my notion of that number, as any other quality is comprehended in any other subject.

It is one of the many properties of the number four, that, when considered together with those other numbers, five, sixteen, twenty, it impresses us with a feeling of the relation of proportion, a feeling that its proportion to five is the same as the proportion of sixteen to twenty; and it is a property, which, as soon as the relation is felt by us, it is impossible for us not to regard as essential to the number four, as when we discover any new quality of a material substance, it is impossible for us not to add this quality, as another part, to our previous complex notion of the substance. We cannot, indeed, perceive this property of the number four till we have considered it at the same time with the other numbers. But, as little can we know the physical qualities which form parts of our complex notion of any substance, till we have considered the substance together with other substances. For example, who could have predicted, on the mere sight of an alkaline solution, that, if mixed with oil, it would convert the oil into a soap, or, if added to a vegetable infusion, would change the colour of the infusion to green? We must have

observed these mixtures, or at least have read or heard of the effects, before we could regard the changes as effects of the presence of the alkali, that is to say, before we could include, in our complex notion of the alkali, as a substance, the qualities of forming soap with oils and of giving a peculiar tinge to vegetable infusions. But, having seen, or read, or heard of these effects, we feel that now, in our complex notion of the alkali, is included, as a part in its comprehending whole, the conception of these particular qualities. In like manner, the affinity of one metal to another with which it admits of amalgamation, may be said to form a part of our complex notion of the metal; and it is the same with every other substance, the various properties of which, as soon as these properties are discovered by us, so as to admit of being stated to others, seem to us to be truly included in the notion of the substance itself, though, before they could be so included, various other substances must have been considered at the same time. When, therefore, I say, four are to five as sixteen to twenty, I state truly a property included in the number four—the property by which it affects us with a certain feeling of relation when considered together with certain other numbers—though, for discovering the property originally, and for feeling it afterwards, it was necessary that the other numbers should be considered together with it; as, when I state that mercury admits of being amalgamated with other metals, I state a property included in my complex notion of mercury, though, for originally discovering the property, and for feeling it afterwards, I must have considered the mercury together with the other metals with which I state its readiness of entering into chemical union. When I consider the same

number four together with other numbers, I discover various other relations, as when I endeavour to form new combinations of mercury, or of other chemical substances, I discover new relations, which I add to my complex notions of the substances themselves. As my original conception of mercury becomes more complex by all the new relations which I trace, so my original conception of the number four, which seemed at first a very simple one, becomes gradually more complex by the detection of the various relations of proportion, which are truly comprehended in it as a subject of our thought—as every new relation which I discover in a chemical substance is comprehended in my widening conception of the substance itself; and the arithmetical or geographical proportion, like the chemical quality, may thus strictly be reduced to the general class of the relations of comprehension.

In this way, every new proportion which is traced out, in a long series of such arithmetical or geometrical propositions, may be considered as the result of a mere analysis, by which elements existing before, but unsuspected, are evolved, as in the other species of reasoning more obviously analytic. It is evident, indeed, that the statement of any property inherent in any subject, must, in rigid accuracy of arrangement, be analytical. But, without insisting on so subtle a process, it may be easier at least, though it should not be more accurate, to regard our reasonings of this kind in the same manner as we formerly regarded our feelings of the simple relation of proportion, involved in each proposition of the reasoning, as forming a class apart; the reasonings we may call, in distinction from our more obvious analytic reasonings, *proportional reasonings*, as we termed the simple



relative suggestions which they involve, relations of proportion.

Whatever be the species of reasoning, however, it is necessary that the propositions which form the reasoning, should follow each other in a certain order; for, without this order, though each proposition might involve some little analysis, and consequently some little accession of knowledge, the knowledge thus acquired must be very limited. There could be no deduction of remote conclusions, by which the primary subject of a distant proposition might be shown, through a long succession of analyses, to have properties which required all these various evolutions before they could themselves be evolved to view. In the proportional reasonings of geometry, we know well that the omission of a single proposition, or even a change of its place, might render apparently false, and almost inconceivable by us, a conclusion which, but for such omission or change of place of a few words of the demonstration, we should have adopted instantly, with a feeling of the absolute impossibility of resisting its evidence.

How is it then, that when order is so essential to discovery, the propositions which we form in our own silent reasoning, arrange themselves, as they rise in succession, in this necessary order; and what are we to think of that art, which, for so many ages, was held out, not so much as an auxiliary to reason, as with the still higher praise of being an instrument that might almost supply its place, by the possession of which the acute and accurate might argue still more acutely and accurately, and imbecility itself become a champion worthy of encountering them; and though not perhaps the victor, at least not always the vanquished?

But to these subjects I must not proceed till my next Lecture.

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### LECTURE XLIX.

*The Order of the Propositions in a Ratiocination is not owing to any Sagacity—Is wholly independent of our Will, and truly depends on the Natural Order of Suggestion.—Diversity in Opinion among Mankind unavoidable from the Variety in their Trains of Suggestion.—What Locke terms Sagacity, may be, in part, produced indirectly.—Difference between the Trains of Thought that arise in Meditation and those submitted to the Public Eye in a Treatise.—There is a Rational Logic.—Analysis of the Scholastic Logic.*

GENTLEMEN, after considering and classing our feelings of relation, as they arise in any particular case, from the simple perception or conception of two or more objects,—I proceeded, in my last Lecture, to consider them as they arise in those series which are denominated reasoning, series that correspond, of course, with the division which we have made of the species of relations involved in the separate propositions that compose them; but of which the most important are those which I termed analytical, as involving in every stage the consideration of a whole and its parts, or those which I termed proportional, as involving some common relation of intellectual measurement. To the former of these orders, indeed, the analytical, the others might, as I stated to you, and endeavoured to prove, admit of being reduced; but as the process which reduces them all to this one great order might seem too subtle, and could afford no additional advantage in our inquiry, I conceived it more advisable, upon the whole, to retain our original division.

Every reasoning is a series of propositions; but every series of propositions is not reasoning, however just the separate propositions may be. The half of eighteen is equal to the cube of three; man is liable to error; marble is a carbonate of lime: these propositions following each other, lead to no conclusion different from those which each separately implies and expresses. To constitute reasoning, it is necessary that there should be some mutual relation of the subjects and predicates of the different propositions. The order in which the different propositions arrange themselves, so as to present to us this mutual relation of the successive subjects and predicates, is therefore of the utmost importance to our consecutive analyses, in the reasonings that are strictly analytic, and to our consecutive measurements in the reasonings which I have termed proportional.

On what does this order depend?

Let us suppose, for example, that A is equal to D, —that we are ignorant of this exact relation,—that we wish to estimate it precisely,—that we have no mode of considering them together, but that without knowing the relation of equality of A to D, we know the relation which these bear to some other objects which may be termed intermediate—that, for example, we know A to be equal to B, which we know to be equal to the half of C, and that C is known by us to be the double of D. If the proportional relative A is equal to B, which is the half of C, which is the double of D, follow each other in our mind in this order, it will be absolutely impossible for us to doubt that A is exactly equal to D, since it is equal to that which is the half of the double of D. But, if any one of these relations of the intermediate objects do not arise in our mind, whether it be the relation of A to B, of



B to C, of C to D, the relation of equality of A to D, which is instantly and irresistibly felt by us, after the former series, will not be felt, though the series should be exactly the same in every respect, with the exception of this single proposition omitted in it. It is not enough that we may have formerly observed and measured B and C, and known their relation to D, unless B occur to us while A is in our thought; and we might thus have all the knowledge which is necessary for discovering the proportional relation of A and D, without the slightest knowledge of the proportion, or even the slightest possibility of knowing it, unless our thoughts should arrange themselves in a certain order. It is quite essential to our demonstration that B and C should arise at certain times; and they do arise at certain times. How is it that this happens?

The common opinion on the subject makes this order a very easy matter. We have a certain sagacity, it is said, by which we find out the intervening propositions that are so; and they are arranged in this order because we have discovered them to be suitable for our measurement, and put them in their proper place. "Those intervening ideas, which serve to show the agreement of any two others," says Locke, "are called proofs. A quickness in the mind to find out these intermediate ideas, (that shall discover the agreement or disagreement of any other,) and to apply them rightly, is, I suppose, that which is called sagacity."<sup>1</sup> And reason itself, in another part of his work, he defines to be "the faculty which finds out these means, and rightly applies them."<sup>2</sup> I need not quote to you the common expressions to the same purport which are to be found in other writers.

<sup>1</sup> Essay concerning Human Understanding, B. IV. c. ii. sect. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. B. IV. c. xvii. sect. 2.

That, in some minds, these intervening conceptions, on which demonstration depends, do arise more readily than in others, there can be no question; and it is by a very natural and obvious metaphor, that minds, able to detect those secret relations, which are not perceived by others to whom the same intervening conceptions have not arisen, or have arisen without suggesting the same feeling of common relation, are said to have peculiar sagacity. But it is a metaphor only, and is far from solving the difficulty. The question still remains, what that process truly is which the word sagacity is borrowed to denote,—whether the intermediate conceptions, that arise more readily in certain minds than in others, arise in consequence of any skill in discovering them, or any voluntary effort in producing them, or whether they do not arise in consequence of laws of suggestion that are independent alike of our skill and of any efforts which that skill might direct? A and D are before us, and have a relation which is at present unknown, but a relation which would be evolved to us, if B and C were to arise to our mind. Do they then arise at our bidding? Or do they arise without being subject to our command, and without obeying it?

After the remarks which I made, in reference to intellectual phenomena, in some degree analogous, I trust that you are able, of yourselves, to decide this question, by the argument which I used on the occasions to which I refer. The mind, it can scarcely fail to occur to you, cannot will the conception of B or C, however essential they may be to our reasoning; since to will them,—at least if we know what we will, which is surely essential to volition,—implies the existence of the very conceptions which we are said to will, as states of the mind present and prior

to the exercise of that sagacity which is said to produce them. If B and C, therefore, rise to our thought, in the case supposed by us, it cannot be because we have willed them; but they must rise in consequence of laws of mind that are independent of our volition. In short, we do not find them out, as Locke says, but they come to us; and when they have thus risen in our mind, we do not apply them, as he says, because we regard them as suitable; but the relation which is involved in them is felt without any intentional application, merely in consequence of their presence together in the mind. The skilful application, indeed, of which he speaks, involves an error of precisely the same kind as that which is involved in the assertion of the volition of the particular conceptions which are said to be thus applied. It necessarily assumes the existence of the very relative feeling for the rise of which it professes to account; since, without this previous feeling, the comparative suitableness of one medium of proof, rather than another, could not be known. The right application of fit conceptions to fit conceptions, in the choice of intermediate ideas, presupposes then, in the very sagacity which is said to apply them rightly, a knowledge of the relation which the intermediate idea bears to the object to which it is applied,—of the very relation, for discovering which alone it is of any consequence that the intermediate idea should be applied.

The subjects of our intervening propositions, in our trains of reasoning,—B and C, for example, by which we discover the relation of A to D, do not, then, and cannot arise in consequence of our willing them; since to will them, would be to have those very subjects of comparison, which we will to exist, already present to our mind, which wills them; and, to will them



with peculiar sagacity, on account of their fitness as subjects of comparison, would be to have already felt that relation, for the mere purpose of discovering which, they are said to be willed. Though arising in conformity with our general desire, then, they do not arise in consequence of any particular volitions; and yet they arise, and arise in the very order that is necessary for developing the remote relation. The whole seeming mystery of this order, in the propositions which form our longest processes of reasoning, depends on the regularity of the laws which guide our simple suggestions in the phenomena of mere association formerly considered by us. Our various conceptions, in our trains of thought, we found, do not follow each other loosely, but according to certain relations. It is not wonderful, therefore, that A should suggest B, which is related to it,—B C,—C D. All this might take place by simple suggestion, though no relation were felt, and consequently no proposition or verbal statement of relation framed. But it is not a train of simple suggestions only which the laws of mind evolve. We are susceptible of the feeling of relation of parts of the train, as much as of the conceptions themselves; and when A has excited the relative conception of B, it is not wonderful that we should feel the relation of A and B; or, when C is excited, the relation of B and C, more than that any other feeling of our mind should arise in its ordinary circumstances: that we should hear the sound of a cannon, in consequence of the vibration of a few invisible particles of air, or see the flash which precedes it, in consequence of some slight affection of our visual nerves. It is impossible for us to will any one of the conceptions in the series A, B, C, D, though we may have the general wish of discovering the rela-

tions of A and D, and consequently their relations to any common objects of comparison. It is equally impossible for us to will our feeling of any one of the relations of these to each other, though we may be desirous of discovering their relations; since to will any particular feeling of relation, would be to have already felt that relation. But the conceptions rise after each other, in a certain order, in consequence of the natural order of the course of suggestion; and our feelings of relation, therefore, and consequently our propositions, which are only our feelings of relations expressed in language, correspond, as might be supposed, with the regularity of the conceptions which suggest them.

The sagacity of which Locke and other writers speak, may then, since it is nothing more than a form of our simple suggestion itself, be reduced to that peculiar tendency of the suggesting principle, varying in different minds, of which I before treated, when considering the Secondary Laws of Suggestion, in their relation to Original Genius. The same objects do not suggest to all the same objects, even where past observation and experience may have been the same; because the peculiar suggestions of the objects, the relations of which are afterwards felt, depend, in a great measure, on constitutional tendencies, varying in different individuals, and, in a great measure, also, on tendencies modified by long habit; and, therefore, varying in different individuals, as these habits may have been different. To some minds,—the common minds, which, in the great multitudes of our race, think what others have thought, as they do what others have done,—the conceptions which form their trains of memory, that scarcely can be called trains of reflection, rise, as we have seen, according to the rela-

tion of mere contiguity, or former proximity in time, of the related images. The conceptions of minds of a higher order rise in almost infinite variety, because they rise according to a relation which does not depend on former co-existence of the very images themselves, but is itself almost infinitely various.

It is this tendency of our suggestions, to rise according to the relation of analogy, which gives inventive vigour to our reasoning, as it gives richness and novelty to our products of mere imagination. By continually presenting to us new objects, in succession, it of course presents to us new relations, and leads the philosophic genius from the simplest perceptions of objects—which the dullest of mankind equally behold, but in which the objects themselves are all which they see—to those sublime relations of universal nature, which bind everything to everything, in the whole infinity of worlds, and of which the knowledge of the immensity is scarcely so wonderful as the apparent insignificance of the means by which the knowledge has been acquired.

The sagacity, then, of which Locke and other writers speak, is as little wonderful in itself as any other modification of the suggesting principle. Since the tendencies to suggestion are various, in different minds, the conceptions which rise according to those tendencies, are of course various; and with the order of our conceptions, that are felt to be related, the relations which we feel must vary. There may, indeed, be the same conclusion formed, when the intervening conceptions, in the trains of reflection of different individuals, have been different. But it is much more likely, that, when these intervening conceptions, of which the relations are felt, have been different, the conclusion, or ultimate relation which results from the



whole, should itself be different ; and that men should not agree in opinion, seems, therefore, to be almost a part of the very laws of intellect, on which the simplest phenomena of thought depend. Even by the same individual, as I remarked before, when treating of the Laws of Simple Suggestion, what opposite conclusions are formed on the same subjects, in different circumstances of health and happiness, or of disease and misfortune, and conclusions which are drawn, with the same logical justness from the premises, in one case as in the other. The process of reasoning, which is only the continued feeling of the relations of conceptions that have arisen by the common laws of suggestion, is equally accurate ; but, though the reasoning itself may have been as accurate, the conceptions of which the successive relations have been felt, during the process of reasoning, were different, in consequence of the tendency of the mind, in these different states, to suggest different and almost opposite images. This tendency to form, under slight changes of circumstance, opposite conclusions on the same subjects, is happily illustrated by Chaulieu, the French poet, in some verses in which he considers himself as viewing nature during a fit of the gout, and of course seeing nothing in it but what is dreadful ; when he is surprised to find different views breaking upon him, of beauty in the universe, and benevolence in its Author, and discovers that the change has arisen, not from any greater brightness of the sky, or from any happier objects that surround him, but from the mere cessation of that paroxysm which had shed, while it lasted, its own darkness on the scene. It is almost as little possible for him, whose train of conceptions is uniformly gloomy, to look upon nature, or, I may say, even upon the God of Nature, in the

same light as that happier mind, which is more disposed to images of joy, as for one, to whose eyes the sunshine has never carried light, to think of the surface of that earth on which he treads, with the same feeling of beauty and admiration as the multitudes around him whose eyes are awake to all the colours that adorn it. What is true, in these extreme cases, is not less true in cases that are less remarkable. How few are the opinions, of any sort, in which the greater number of mankind concur; and, even in the case of those opinions in which they are unanimous, how few, if they were to attempt to support them by argument, would support them by argument precisely similar. All might set out with the same conception, in their primary design; and, if the discovery of the strongest proofs depended on the mere will to discover the strongest, all would instantly, by the exercise of this simple will, be omnipotent logicians. But all are not omnipotent logicians; for the intermediate conceptions which rise to one mind, do not rise to others; and the relations, therefore, which those intermediate conceptions suggest, are felt of course, and stated, only by those to whom the conceptions which suggest them have arisen.

The differences of opinion in mankind, then, far from being wonderful, are such as must have arisen, though there had been no other cause of difference than the variety of the conceptions, which, by the simple laws of suggestion, occur in the various trains of thought of individuals, diversifying, of course, the order of propositions in their reasonings, and, consequently, the relation which the conclusion involves. The objects compared, at every stage of the argument, have been different; and the results of the comparison of different objects, therefore, cannot

well be expected to be the same. I formerly alluded to a whimsical speculation of Diderot, in which he personifies the senses, and makes them members of a society, capable of holding communication with each other, and of discoursing scientifically, on one subject at least, that of numbers, in the calculations of which he conceives that each of them might become as expert as the most expert arithmeticians. In all their other colloquies, however, it is quite evident that each must appear to the rest absolutely insane; because each must speak of objects and relations, of which the others would be incapable of forming even the slightest notion. "I shall remark only," says Diderot, "that, in such a case, the richer any sense was, in notions peculiar to itself, the more extravagant would it appear to the rest,—that the stupidest of the whole would, therefore, infallibly be the one that would count itself the wisest,—that a sense would seldom be contradicted, except on subjects which it knew the best,—and that there always would be four wrong, against the one that was right; which may serve to give a very fair opinion of the judgments of the multitude."<sup>1</sup> In the reasonings of mankind, indeed, the sources of difference are not so striking and obvious, as in this allegorical society. But, in many instances, they are nearly as much so; and merely because the same order of propositions, that is to say, the same order of conceptions and relative feelings, has not arisen in the reasonings of the ignorant, they laugh inwardly at the follies and extravagance of the wise, with the same wonder and disdain with which, in Diderot's fabled society of the senses, the Ear would have listened to the Eye, when it spoke, with calm philosophy, of forms and colours,

<sup>1</sup> Œuvres, tom. ii. p. 133-134.



or which, in return, the Eye would have felt for the seeming madness of the Ear, when it raved, in its strange ecstasies, of airs and harmonies.

The different order of propositions in our trains of reasoning, and, consequently, in a great measure, the different results of reasoning, may then, it appears, depend on the mere differences of simple suggestion, in consequence of which different relations are felt, because the relative objects suggested to the mind are different. But in like manner, as there are, in different minds, different tendencies of simple suggestion, there are also, in different minds, peculiar tendencies to different relative suggestions, from the contemplation of the same objects. Any two objects may have various relations, and may, therefore, suggest these variously. The same two columns, for example, when we look at the remains of ancient splendour, in some magnificent ruin, may, in the moment of the first suggestion, produce, in our mind, the feeling of their resemblance or difference, of their relative position, of their comparative degrees of beauty, of their proportion in dimensions; or various other relations that may be easily imagined, which connect them, as parts of one whole, with the melancholy traces of present decay, or the still more melancholy vestiges of the flourishing past. In different minds, there is a tendency to feel some of these relations, more than others, a tendency which may be traced, in part, to original constitutional diversities; but which depends, also in part, on factitious habits, and on transient circumstances of the moment, intellectual or bodily. In short, there are secondary laws of relative suggestion, constitutional, habitual, and temporary, as there are secondary laws of simple suggestion, in like manner, constitutional, habitual,

these secondary laws, as well as suggestion, since they vary the individuals, and, therefore, which different individuals are unquestionably to our estimation of diversities that consist, both in the variety of which arise and the variety of the relative conceptions suggest—and which, as compound, you are now, I flatter myself, reduce to the simple elements that compose it. On the influence, then, which education has on tendencies, both of simple and relative suggestion, we can, in this way, indirectly produce, in part, that sagacity, or ready discovery, of means of proof which I have shown to be absolutely beyond our direct volition. We can continually render ourselves acquainted with more objects, and can thus increase the store of possible suggestions, which may, on occasion, present to us new means of proof; and we can even, by the influence of certain habits, so modify the general tendency of suggestion, that certain relations, rather than others, shall rise to the mind, or shall rise, at least, more rapidly and readily. How many arguments occur to a well-cultivated understanding, in treating every subject which comes beneath its review, that never would have occurred to others;—and, though not one of the separate suggestions, which either strengthen or adorn the reasoning, has been the object of a particular volition,—the general cultivation, from which they all flow, has been willed, and would not have taken place but for that love of letters and science which continued to animate the studies which it produced,—making it delightful to know what it was happiness almost to wish to learn.

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The different order of propositions in our trains of reasoning, and, consequently, in a great measure, the different results of reasoning, may then, it appears, depend on the mere differences of simple suggestion, in consequence of which different relations are felt, because the relative objects suggested to the mind are different. But in like manner, as there are, in different minds, different tendencies of simple suggestion, there are also, in different minds, peculiar tendencies to different relative suggestions, from the contemplation of the same objects. Any two objects may have various relations, and may, therefore, suggest these variously. The same two columns, for example, when we look at the remains of ancient splendour, in some magnificent ruin, may, in the moment of the first suggestion, produce, in our mind, the feeling of their resemblance or difference, of their relative position, of their comparative degrees of beauty, of their proportion in dimensions; or various other relations that may be easily imagined, which connect them, as parts of one whole, with the melancholy traces of present decay, or the still more melancholy vestiges of the flourishing past. In different minds, there is a tendency to feel some of these relations, more than others, a tendency which may be traced, in part, to original constitutional diversities; but which depends, also in part, on factitious habits, and on transient circumstances of the moment, intellectual or bodily. In short, there are secondary laws of relative suggestion, constitutional, habitual, and temporary, as there are secondary laws of simple suggestion, in like manner, constitutional, habitual,



and temporary; and these secondary laws, as well as those of simple suggestion, since they vary the relations which are felt by individuals, and, therefore, the results of reflective thought, which different individuals present to the world, are unquestionably to be taken into account, in our estimation of diversities of genius—diversities that consist, both in the variety of the conceptions which arise and the variety of the relations which those conceptions suggest—and which, as one splendid compound, you are now, I flatter myself, able to reduce to the simple elements that compose it.

From the influence, then, which education has on the tendencies, both of simple and relative suggestion, we can, in this way, indirectly produce, in part, that sagacity, or ready discovery, of means of proof which I have shown to be absolutely beyond our direct volition. We can continually render ourselves acquainted with more objects, and can thus increase the store of possible suggestions, which may, on occasion, present to us new means of proof; and we can even, by the influence of certain habits, so modify the general tendency of suggestion, that certain relations, rather than others, shall rise to the mind, or shall rise, at least, more rapidly and readily. How many arguments occur to a well-cultivated understanding, in treating every subject which comes beneath its review, that never would have occurred to others;—and, though not one of the separate suggestions, which either strengthen or adorn the reasoning, has been the object of a particular volition,—the general cultivation, from which they all flow, has been willed, and would not have taken place but for that love of letters and science which continued to animate the studies which it produced,—making it delightful to know what it was happiness almost to wish to learn.

Such is the process of ratiocination, considered as a natural process of the mind. But what are we to think of that art of reasoning, which, for so many ages, banished reason from the schools;—of that art which rendered it so laborious a drudgery to be a little more ignorant than before, which could produce so much disputation without any subject of dispute, and so many proud victories of nothing over less than nothing! I need not say that it is to the scholastic art of logic I allude.

That there may be, or rather that there is a rational logic, I am far from denying; and that many useful directions, in conformity with a certain system of rules, may be given to the inexperienced student that may facilitate to him acquisitions of knowledge, which, but for such directions, he would have made only more slowly, or perhaps not made at all. The art of reasoning, however, which a judicious logic affords, is not so much the art of acquiring knowledge as the art of communicating it to others, or recording it in the manner that may be most profitable for our own future advancement in the track which we have been pursuing. Its direct benefit to ourselves is rather negative than positive—teaching us the sources of error in our mental constitution, and in all the accidental circumstances of the language which we are obliged to use, and the society in which we must mingle,—and thus rather saving us from what is false, than bestowing on us what is true. Indeed, since we cannot, as I have shown, produce directly in our mind any one conception, or any one feeling of relation, it is very evident that the influence of any art of reasoning on our trains of thought must be indirect only.

But if an art of reasoning is to be given to us, it is

surely to be an art which is to render the acquisition of knowledge more easy, not more difficult; an art which is to avail itself of the natural tendency of the mind to the discovery of truth, not to counteract this tendency, and to force the mind, if it be possible, to suspend the very progress which was leading it to truth. With which of these characters did the syllogistic logic more exactly correspond?

The natural progress of reasoning I have already explained to you, and illustrated by examples both of the analytic and proportional kind. One conception follows another conception, according to certain laws of suggestion, to which our Divine Author has adapted our mental constitution; and, by another set of laws, which the same Divine Author has established, certain feelings of relation arise from the consideration of the suggesting and suggested object. This is all in which reasoning, as felt by us, truly consists. We have the conception of A, it suggests B, and, these two conceptions co-existing, we feel some relation which they bear to each other. B, thus suggested, suggests C; and the relation of these is felt in like manner; and thus, through the longest ratiocination, analytical or proportional, each subject of our thought suggests something which forms a part of it and is involved in it, or something which has to it a certain relation of proportion; and the relation of comprehension in the one case, or of proportion in the other case, is felt accordingly at every step. Nothing, surely, can be simpler than a process of this kind; and it is not easy to conceive how the process could be made shorter than nature herself has rendered it, unless every truth were known to us by intuition. Objects, and the relation of objects,—these are all which reasoning involves; and these must always be involved in every



reasoning. While reasoning, then, or a series of propositions, is necessary for the development of truth, the intervening conceptions which form the subjects of those propositions that connect one remote conception with another must arise successively in the mind, and their relations be felt, in like manner, successively. What is it which the syllogistic art would confer on us in addition? To shorten the process of arriving at truth, it forces us to use, in every case, three propositions instead of the two which nature directs us to use. Instead of allowing us to say man is fallible—he may therefore err even when he thinks himself most secure from error, which is the spontaneous order of analysis in reasoning—the syllogistic art compels us to take a longer journey to the same conclusion, by the use of what it calls a major proposition; a proposition which never rises spontaneously, for the best of all reasons, that it cannot rise without our knowledge of the very truth which is by supposition unknown. To proceed, in the regular form of a syllogism, we must say, all beings that are fallible may err, even when they think themselves most secure from error. But man is a fallible being—he may therefore err, even when he thinks himself most secure from error. In our spontaneous reasonings, in which we arrive at precisely the same conclusions, and with a feeling of evidence precisely the same, there are, as I have said, no major propositions, but simply what, in this futile art, are termed technically the minor and the conclusion. The invention and formal statement of a major proposition, then, in every case, serve only to retard the progress of discovery, not to quicken it, or render it, in the slightest degree, more sure.

This retardation of the progress of reasoning is one circumstance which distinguishes the syllogism; but

the absurdity, which is implied in the very theory of it, distinguishes it still more. It constantly assumes, as the first stage of that reasoning by which we are to arrive at a particular truth, our previous knowledge of that particular truth. The major is the very conclusion itself under another form, and its truth is not more felt than that which it professes to develop. Thus, to take one of the trifling examples which, in books of logic, are usually given, with a most appropriate selection, to illustrate this worse than trifling art—when, in order to prove that John is a sinner, I do not adduce any particular sin of which he has been guilty, but draw up my accusation more irresistibly, by the major of a syllogism. All men are sinners. John is a man, therefore John is a sinner. If I really attached any meaning to my major proposition, all men are sinners, I must, at that very moment, have felt as completely that John was a sinner, as after I had pursued him, technically, through the minor and conclusion.

The great error of the theory of the syllogism—an error which, if my time allowed, it would be interesting to trace in its relation to the ideal systems of forms and species, which prevailed when the syllogistic art was invented, and during the long ages of its sway—consisted in supposing that, because all our knowledge may be technically reduced, in some measure, to general maxims, these maxims have naturally a prior and paramount existence in our thought, and give rise to those very reasonings which, on the contrary, give rise to them.

It is not on account of our previous assent to the axiom, A whole is greater than a part, that we believe any particular whole to be greater than any part of it; but we feel this truth in every particular case,





The syllogism, therefore, which proceeds from the axiom to the demonstration of particulars, reverses completely the order of reasoning, and begins with the conclusion, in order to teach us how we may arrive at it. It is, in the great journey of truth, as if, in any of our common journeyings from place to place—from Edinburgh to London, for example—we were to be directed first to go to London, and then to find out York or some other intermediate town, when we might be quite sure of knowing the way from York to London, because we must already have travelled it. Is this the sort of direction which we could venture to give to any traveller, or would not every traveller, if we were to venture to give him such a direction, smile at our folly? It would have been happy for science if the similar folly of the dialectic directions of the schools had been as easily perceived. But we all know what it is to journey from place to place; and few know, accurately, what it is to journey from truth to truth. In the one case, we are fond of the shortest road, and very soon find out what that shortest road is. In the other case, it is by no means certain that we are fond of the shortest road, or at least we have an unfortunate tendency to believe that a road is the shortest possible, merely because, being a great deal longer, it may have made us go through much very rapid exercise to very little purpose.

“God has not been so sparing to men,” says Mr Locke, “as to make them barely two-legged animals,<sup>1</sup> and left it to Aristotle to make them rational.”<sup>2</sup> Indeed, the most convincing proof of their own independent rationality is, that, with the encumbrance of the logical system of the schools, they were able to shake

<sup>1</sup> Creatures—Orig.

<sup>2</sup> Essay concerning Human Understanding, B. IV. c. xvii. sect. 4.

this off, and to become reasoners in the true and noble sense of that term, by abandoning the art which made them only disputants.

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### LECTURE L.

*Analysis of the Scholastic Logic, continued.—Order II., Relations of Succession.*

IN my last Lecture, Gentlemen, after analysing the process of ratiocination, and explaining the laws on which the order of its regular series of propositions depends, I proceeded to consider the logic of the schools as an instrument of reasoning, not on account of any merits which I supposed it to possess, as a useful instrument for this purpose, but merely from that interest which even error itself acquires, when it is regarded as the error of all the wise, or of all who were considered as wise for many ages. The ruins of a mighty intellectual system must surely be viewed by us with some portion at least of that emotion which is so readily excited by the decaying monuments, and the mere workmanship of mechanic art, in the ruins of an ancient city, or even of the solitary castle of some distinguished chieftain. It is impossible not to pause on the intellectual ruin, as we would pause on some half-worn sculpture or fallen column, when the same column or sculpture, if existing entire in any modern edifice, would scarcely attract our regard.

In considering this ancient system—ancient, unfortunately, only if we date it from the period at which it began its destructive reign, and not, if we date it from the period of its decay—I endeavoured to show

gradually upward, since we should then have known previously the minute specific circumstances involved in the higher orders and classes to which we had gradually ascended, it might have been absurd to suppose that these specific circumstances, previously known, could be discovered to us by analysis. The mode in which we generalize, is, however, very different. In our systematic tables, indeed, if we were to judge from these only, we might seem to have a regular advance from individuals to classes, through species, genera, orders. But, in the actual process of generalizing, we form classes and orders before we distinguish the minuter varieties. We are struck first with some resemblance of a multitude of objects, perhaps a very remote one, in consequence of which we class them together, and we attend afterwards to the differences which distinguish them, separating them into genera and species according to these differences. Every general term which we use, must express, indeed, an agreement of some sort, that has led us to invent and apply the term; but we may feel one resemblance, without feeling, or even suspecting other resemblances as real; and the very circumstance of agreement which we perceive, at the time when we class objects together as related, may involve, or comprehend, certain circumstances to which we then paid no attention, and which occur to us only in that intellectual analysis of ratiocination of which I spoke. It is as if we knew the situation and bearings of all the great cities in Europe, and could lay down, with most accurate precision, their longitude and latitude. To know this much, is to know that a certain space must intervene between them, but it is not to know what that space contains. The process of reasoning, in the discoveries which it gives, is like that topographic



under their own artificial method, and to give it a name, which might imply the necessity of this reduction, before the reasoning itself could be worthy of that honourable title. They supposed, accordingly, the proposition, which was technically wanting, to be understood in the mind of the thinker or hearer, and termed the reasoning, therefore, an enthymeme. It was, they said, a truncated or imperfect syllogism. They would have expressed themselves more accurately, if they had described their own syllogism as, in its relation to the natural analytic process of our thought, a cumbrous and overloaded enthymeme.

The imperfection of the syllogism, as an instrument of reasoning for the acquisition of knowledge, is strikingly shown by the very examples which every writer on the subject employs to illustrate its power. If all the instances that have been used for this purpose, in the innumerable works of the schoolmen, were collected together, though they might make a pretty large volume, they would not communicate to the most ignorant reader a single truth; and can we think, then, that the superior facility which it gives for the discovery of truth is an excellence to which it may fairly lay claim? If the art could have been made profitable, in any way, for discovery, there can be no doubt that some zealous admirer of it, in the enthusiasm of his admiration, would have illustrated its power by some applications of it that were more than verbal trifling. Yet, I may safely venture to say, that a mere perusal of the reasonings, brought forward as illustrative of the power of the syllogism, would be sufficient to convince the reader, if he had any doubt before, of the absolute inefficacy of the art, of which he was perusing the shadowy achievements.

It is very justly remarked by Dr Reid, in his

tions of co-existence, in all the propositions which express them, might, in strictness of analysis, be reduced; even that relation of proportion which is of such importance in the reasonings of geometry and arithmetic; so that every species of reasoning would be, in the strictest sense of the word, analytical, evolving only qualities essential to the very nature of the subjects of the different proportions. When, therefore, in developing one of the relations of proportion, I say, four are to five as sixteen to twenty, I state a relation of the number four, which may be regarded as comprehended in my notion of that number, as any other quality is comprehended in any other subject.

It is one of the many properties of the number four, that, when considered together with those other numbers, five, sixteen, twenty, it impresses us with a feeling of the relation of proportion, a feeling that its proportion to five is the same as the proportion of sixteen to twenty; and it is a property, which, as soon as the relation is felt by us, it is impossible for us not to regard as essential to the number four, as when we discover any new quality of a material substance, it is impossible for us not to add this quality, as another part, to our previous complex notion of the substance. We cannot, indeed, perceive this property of the number four till we have considered it at the same time with the other numbers. But, as little can we know the physical qualities which form parts of our complex notion of any substance, till we have considered the substance together with other substances. For example, who could have predicted, on the mere sight of an alkaline solution, that, if mixed with oil, it would convert the oil into a soap, or, if added to a vegetable infusion, would change the colour of the infusion to green? We must have

observed these mixtures, or at least have read or heard of the effects, before we could regard the changes as effects of the presence of the alkali, that is to say, before we could include, in our complex notion of the alkali, as a substance, the qualities of forming soap with oils and of giving a peculiar tinge to vegetable infusions. But, having seen, or read, or heard of these effects, we feel that now, in our complex notion of the alkali, is included, as a part in its comprehending whole, the conception of these particular qualities. In like manner, the affinity of one metal to another with which it admits of amalgamation, may be said to form a part of our complex notion of the metal; and it is the same with every other substance, the various properties of which, as soon as these properties are discovered by us, so as to admit of being stated to others, seem to us to be truly included in the notion of the substance itself, though, before they could be so included, various other substances must have been considered at the same time. When, therefore, I say, four are to five as sixteen to twenty, I state truly a property included in the number four—the property by which it affects us with a certain feeling of relation when considered together with certain other numbers—though, for discovering the property originally, and for feeling it afterwards, it was necessary that the other numbers should be considered together with it; as, when I state that mercury admits of being amalgamated with other metals, I state a property included in my complex notion of mercury, though, for originally discovering the property, and for feeling it afterwards, I must have considered the mercury together with the other metals with which I state its readiness of entering into chemical union. When I consider the same



number four together with other numbers, I discover various other relations, as when I endeavour to form new combinations of mercury, or of other chemical substances, I discover new relations, which I add to my complex notions of the substances themselves. As my original conception of mercury becomes more complex by all the new relations which I trace, so my original conception of the number four, which seemed at first a very simple one, becomes gradually more complex by the detection of the various relations of proportion, which are truly comprehended in it as a subject of our thought—as every new relation which I discover in a chemical substance is comprehended in my widening conception of the substance itself; and the arithmetical or geographical proportion, like the chemical quality, may thus strictly be reduced to the general class of the relations of comprehension.

In this way, every new proportion which is traced out, in a long series of such arithmetical or geometrical propositions, may be considered as the result of a mere analysis, by which elements existing before, but unsuspected, are evolved, as in the other species of reasoning more obviously analytic. It is evident, indeed, that the statement of any property inherent in any subject, must, in rigid accuracy of arrangement, be analytical. But, without insisting on so subtle a process, it may be easier at least, though it should not be more accurate, to regard our reasonings of this kind in the same manner as we formerly regarded our feelings of the simple relation of proportion, involved in each proposition of the reasoning, as forming a class apart; the reasonings we may call, in distinction from our more obvious analytic reasonings, *proportional reasonings*, as we termed the simple

may admit, for example, that Peter is six feet high, though, if his stature were attempted to be demonstrated to us by the syllogism—all men are six feet high, but Peter is a man, therefore Peter is six feet high—we should certainly object to the major proposition, and form our belief only on particular observation of the individual. But though we may thus admit the proposition which forms the conclusion of a syllogism, without admitting the major proposition, from which it is said to flow, it is absolutely impossible that we should know the meaning of the major, and admit it, without admitting also, tacitly, indeed, but with equal feeling of its truth, the conclusion itself. The whole question, as we have seen, relates to the feeling of the truth of the major proposition: for, if it be true, and felt to be true, all the rest is already allowed; and yet this most important of all propositions, which, if the conclusion be of a kind that demands proof, must itself demand proof still more, is the very proposition which is most preposterously submitted to us in the first place for our assent, without any proof whatever,—the honour of a proof being reserved only for a proposition, which, if the major require no proof, must be itself too clear to stand in need of it. As a mode of communicating knowledge, therefore, the syllogism is, if possible, still more defective than as a mode of acquiring it. It does not give any additional knowledge, nor communicate the knowledge which it does communicate in any simpler, or shorter, or surer way. On the contrary, whatever knowledge it gives, it renders more confused by being more cumbrous; and it cannot fail to train the mind, which receives instruction in this way, to two of the most dangerous practical errors,—the errors of admitting, without proof, only what requires

But to these subjects I must not proceed till my next Lecture.

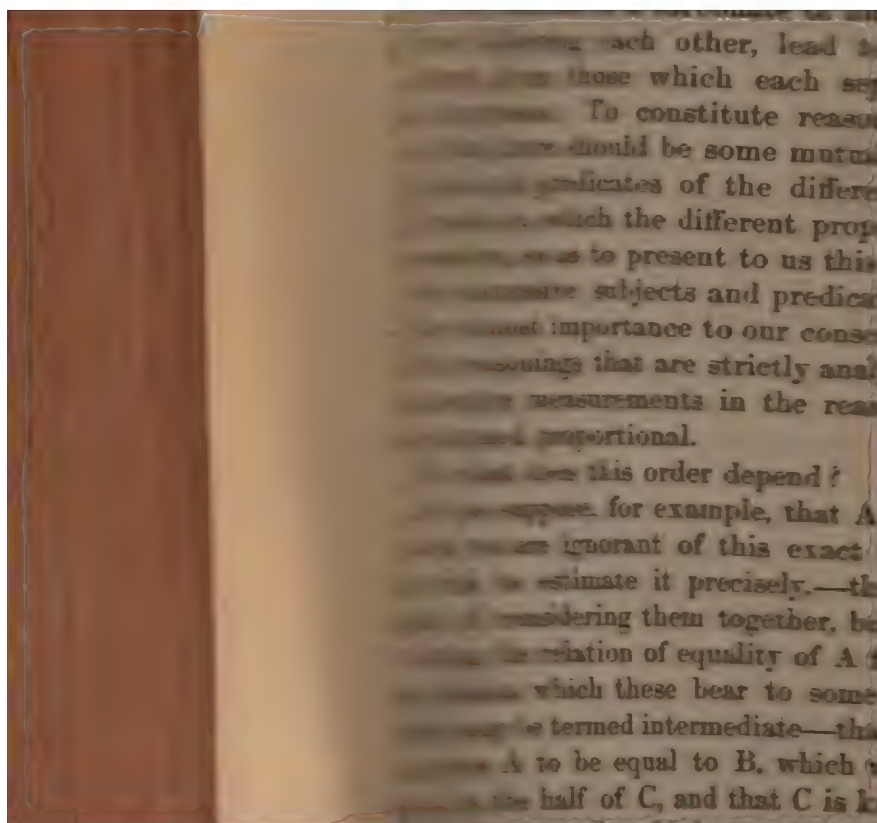
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### LECTURE XLIX.

*The Order of the Propositions in a Ratiocination is not owing to any Sagacity—Is wholly independent of our Will, and truly depends on the Natural Order of Suggestion.—Diversity in Opinion among Mankind unavoidable from the Variety in their Trains of Suggestion.—What Locke terms Sagacity, may be, in part, produced indirectly.—Difference between the Trains of Thought that arise in Meditation and those submitted to the Public Eye in a Treatise.—There is a Rational Logic.—Analysis of the Scholastic Logic.*

GENTLEMEN, after considering and classing our feelings of relation, as they arise in any particular case, from the simple perception or conception of two or more objects,—I proceeded, in my last Lecture, to consider them as they arise in those series which are denominated reasoning, series that correspond, of course, with the division which we have made of the species of relations involved in the separate propositions that compose them; but of which the most important are those which I termed analytical, as involving in every stage the consideration of a whole and its parts, or those which I termed proportional, as involving some common relation of intellectual measurement. To the former of these orders, indeed, the analytical, the others might, as I stated to you, and endeavoured to prove, admit of being reduced; but as the process which reduces them all to this one great order might seem too subtile, and could afford no additional advantage in our inquiry, I conceived it more advisable, upon the whole, to retain our original division.





B to C, of C to D, the relation of equality of A to D, which is instantly and irresistibly felt by us, after the former series, will not be felt, though the series should be exactly the same in every respect, with the exception of this single proposition omitted in it. It is not enough that we may have formerly observed and measured B and C, and known their relation to D, unless B occur to us while A is in our thought; and we might thus have all the knowledge which is necessary for discovering the proportional relation of A and D, without the slightest knowledge of the proportion, or even the slightest possibility of knowing it, unless our thoughts should arrange themselves in a certain order. It is quite essential to our demonstration that B and C should arise at certain times; and they do arise at certain times. How is it that this happens?

The common opinion on the subject makes this order a very easy matter. We have a certain sagacity, it is said, by which we find out the intervening propositions that are so; and they are arranged in this order because we have discovered them to be suitable for our measurement, and put them in their proper place. "Those intervening ideas, which serve to show the agreement of any two others," says Locke, "are called proofs. A quickness in the mind to find out these intermediate ideas, (that shall discover the agreement or disagreement of any other,) and to apply them rightly, is, I suppose, that which is called sagacity."<sup>1</sup> And reason itself, in another part of his work, he defines to be "the faculty which finds out these means, and rightly applies them."<sup>2</sup> I need not quote to you the common expressions to the same purport which are to be found in other writers.

<sup>1</sup> Essay concerning Human Understanding, B. IV. c. ii. sect. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. B. IV. c. xvii. sect. 2.

That, in some minds, these intervening conceptions, on which demonstration depends, do arise more readily than in others, there can be no question; and it is by a very natural and obvious metaphor, that minds, able to detect those secret relations, which are not perceived by others to whom the same intervening conceptions have not arisen, or have arisen without suggesting the same feeling of common relation, are said to have peculiar sagacity. But it is a metaphor only, and is far from solving the difficulty. The question still remains, what that process truly is which the word sagacity is borrowed to denote,—whether the intermediate conceptions, that arise more readily in certain minds than in others, arise in consequence of any skill in discovering them, or any voluntary effort in producing them, or whether they do not arise in consequence of laws of suggestion that are independent alike of our skill and of any efforts which that skill might direct? A and D are before us, and have a relation which is at present unknown, but a relation which would be evolved to us, if B and C were to arise to our mind. Do they then arise at our bidding? Or do they arise without being subject to our command, and without obeying it?

After the remarks which I made, in reference to intellectual phenomena, in some degree analogous, I trust that you are able, of yourselves, to decide this question, by the argument which I used on the occasions to which I refer. The mind, it can scarcely fail to occur to you, cannot will the conception of B or C, however essential they may be to our reasoning; since to will them,—at least if we know what we will, which is surely essential to volition,—implies the existence of the very conceptions which we are said to will, as states of the mind present and prior



to the exercise of that sagacity which is said to produce them. If B and C, therefore, rise to our thought, in the case supposed by us, it cannot be because we have willed them; but they must rise in consequence of laws of mind that are independent of our volition. In short, we do not find them out, as Locke says, but they come to us; and when they have thus risen in our mind, we do not apply them, as he says, because we regard them as suitable; but the relation which is involved in them is felt without any intentional application, merely in consequence of their presence together in the mind. The skilful application, indeed, of which he speaks, involves an error of precisely the same kind as that which is involved in the assertion of the volition of the particular conceptions which are said to be thus applied. It necessarily assumes the existence of the very relative feeling for the rise of which it professes to account; since, without this previous feeling, the comparative suitableness of one medium of proof, rather than another, could not be known. The right application of fit conceptions to fit conceptions, in the choice of intermediate ideas, presupposes then, in the very sagacity which is said to apply them rightly, a knowledge of the relation which the intermediate idea bears to the object to which it is applied,—of the very relation, for discovering which alone it is of any consequence that the intermediate idea should be applied.

The subjects of our intervening propositions, in our trains of reasoning,—B and C, for example, by which we discover the relation of A to D, do not, then, and cannot arise in consequence of our willing them; since to will them, would be to have those very subjects of comparison, which we will to exist, already present to our mind, which wills them; and, to will them



tions of A and D, and consequently their relations to any common objects of comparison. It is equally impossible for us to will our feeling of any one of the relations of these to each other, though we may be desirous of discovering their relations; since to will any particular feeling of relation, would be to have already felt that relation. But the conceptions rise after each other, in a certain order, in consequence of the natural order of the course of suggestion; and our feelings of relation, therefore, and consequently our propositions, which are only our feelings of relations expressed in language, correspond, as might be supposed, with the regularity of the conceptions which suggest them.

The sagacity of which Locke and other writers speak, may then, since it is nothing more than a form of our simple suggestion itself, be reduced to that peculiar tendency of the suggesting principle, varying in different minds, of which I before treated, when considering the Secondary Laws of Suggestion, in their relation to Original Genius. The same objects do not suggest to all the same objects, even where past observation and experience may have been the same; because the peculiar suggestions of the objects, the relations of which are afterwards felt, depend, in a great measure, on constitutional tendencies, varying in different individuals, and, in a great measure, also, on tendencies modified by long habit; and, therefore, varying in different individuals, as these habits may have been different. To some minds,—the common minds, which, in the great multitudes of our race, think what others have thought, as they do what others have done,—the conceptions which form their trains of memory, that scarcely can be called trains of reflection, rise, as we have seen, according to the rela-



the mind is brought to a closer proximity in time, and space, to the objects. The conceptions of minds of a given class are of a more or less variety, because the mind is brought to a relation which does not admit of a single conception of the very images themselves, and the relations are infinitely various.

The mind is brought to a suggestion to rise according to the nature of the object, which gives invention and imagination, and gives richness and variety to the conceptions of the imagination. By the mind's suggestion of new objects in succession, the mind is brought to new relations, and leads the mind to the simplest perceptions of the objects of the world of mankind equally be-cause the objects of the world are all which the mind is brought to new relations of universal nature, and the mind is brought to everything in the whole in-terest of the world, and in which the knowledge of the objects is brought to the wonderful as the apparent and the mind is brought to the knowledge has been brought.

The suggestion of the mind which Locke and other writers speak of as the wonderful in itself as any other suggestion of the suggesting principle. Since the tendencies to suggestion are various in different minds, the conceptions which rise according to those tendencies, are of course various, and with the order of our con-ceptions, that are felt to be related, the relations which we feel must vary. There may, indeed, be the same conclusion formed, when the intervening concep-tions, in the trains of reflection of different individuals, have been different. But it is much more likely, that, when these intervening conceptions, of which the relations are felt, have been different, the conclu-sion, or ultimate relation which results from the

whole, should itself be different ; and that men should not agree in opinion, seems, therefore, to be almost a part of the very laws of intellect, on which the simplest phenomena of thought depend. Even by the same individual, as I remarked before, when treating of the Laws of Simple Suggestion, what opposite conclusions are formed on the same subjects, in different circumstances of health and happiness, or of disease and misfortune, and conclusions which are drawn, with the same logical justness from the premises, in one case as in the other. The process of reasoning, which is only the continued feeling of the relations of conceptions that have arisen by the common laws of suggestion, is equally accurate ; but, though the reasoning itself may have been as accurate, the conceptions of which the successive relations have been felt, during the process of reasoning, were different, in consequence of the tendency of the mind, in these different states, to suggest different and almost opposite images. This tendency to form, under slight changes of circumstance, opposite conclusions on the same subjects, is happily illustrated by Chaulieu, the French poet, in some verses in which he considers himself as viewing nature during a fit of the gout, and of course seeing nothing in it but what is dreadful ; when he is surprised to find different views breaking upon him, of beauty in the universe, and benevolence in its Author, and discovers that the change has arisen, not from any greater brightness of the sky, or from any happier objects that surround him, but from the mere cessation of that paroxysm which had shed, while it lasted, its own darkness on the scene. It is almost as little possible for him, whose train of conceptions is uniformly gloomy, to look upon nature, or, I may say, even upon the God of Nature, in the

some part of the human mind, which is more disposed to images than to ideas, to whose eyes the sunbeams of truth cannot light, to think of the nature of the earth on which he treads, with the same feeling of doubt and admiration as the multi-tudes which his waking eyes are awake to all the objects that surround him. What is true in these extreme cases is not less true in cases that are less remarkable. Every man has the opinions, of any sort, in which the greater number of mankind concur; and, even in the case of those opinions in which they are dissidents, they will, if they were to attempt to support them by argument, would support them by arguments precisely similar. All might set out with the same conception in their primary design; and, if the discovery of the strongest proofs depended on the mere will to discover the strongest, all would infallibly, by the exercise of this simple will, be omnipotent logicians. But all are not omnipotent logicians; for the intermediate conceptions which rise to one mind do not rise to others; and the relations, therefore, which those intermediate conceptions suggest, are felt of course, and stated, only by those to whom the conceptions which suggest them have arisen.

The differences of opinion in mankind, then, far from being wonderful are such as must have arisen, though there had been no other cause of difference than the variety of the conceptions, which, by the simple laws of suggestion, occur in the various trains of thought of individuals, diversifying, of course, the order of propositions in their reasonings, and, consequently, the relation which the conclusion involves. The objects compared, at every stage of the argument, have been different; and the results of the comparison of different objects, therefore, cannot



well be expected to be the same. I formerly alluded to a whimsical speculation of Diderot, in which he personifies the senses, and makes them members of a society, capable of holding communication with each other, and of discoursing scientifically, on one subject at least, that of numbers, in the calculations of which he conceives that each of them might become as expert as the most expert arithmeticians. In all their other colloquies, however, it is quite evident that each must appear to the rest absolutely insane; because each must speak of objects and relations, of which the others would be incapable of forming even the slightest notion. "I shall remark only," says Diderot, "that, in such a case, the richer any sense was, in notions peculiar to itself, the more extravagant would it appear to the rest,—that the stupidest of the whole would, therefore, infallibly be the one that would count itself the wisest,—that a sense would seldom be contradicted, except on subjects which it knew the best,—and that there always would be four wrong, against the one that was right; which may serve to give a very fair opinion of the judgments of the multitude."<sup>1</sup> In the reasonings of mankind, indeed, the sources of difference are not so striking and obvious, as in this allegorical society. But, in many instances, they are nearly as much so; and merely because the same order of propositions, that is to say, the same order of conceptions and relative feelings, has not arisen in the reasonings of the ignorant, they laugh inwardly at the follies and extravagance of the wise, with the same wonder and disdain with which, in Diderot's fabled society of the senses, the Ear would have listened to the Eye, when it spoke, with calm philosophy, of forms and colours,

<sup>1</sup> Œuvres, tom. ii. p. 133-134.

or which, in return, the Eye would have felt for the seeming madness of the Ear, when it raved, in its strange ecstasies, of airs and harmonies.

The different order of propositions in our trains of reasoning, and, consequently, in a great measure, the different results of reasoning, may then, it appears, depend on the mere differences of simple suggestion, in consequence of which different relations are felt, because the relative objects suggested to the mind are different. But in like manner, as there are, in different minds, different tendencies of simple suggestion, there are also, in different minds, peculiar tendencies to different relative suggestions, from the contemplation of the same objects. Any two objects may have various relations, and may, therefore, suggest these variously. The same two columns, for example, when we look at the remains of ancient splendour, in some magnificent ruin, may, in the moment of the first suggestion, produce, in our mind, the feeling of their resemblance or difference, of their relative position, of their comparative degrees of beauty, of their proportion in dimensions; or various other relations that may be easily imagined, which connect them, as parts of one whole, with the melancholy traces of present decay, or the still more melancholy vestiges of the flourishing past. In different minds, there is a tendency to feel some of these relations, more than others, a tendency which may be traced, in part, to original constitutional diversities; but which depends, also in part, on factitious habits, and on transient circumstances of the moment, intellectual or bodily. In short, there are secondary laws of relative suggestion, constitutional, habitual, and temporary, as there are secondary laws of simple suggestion, in like manner, constitutional, habitual,

and temporary; and these secondary laws, as well as those of simple suggestion, since they vary the relations which are felt by individuals, and, therefore, the results of reflective thought, which different individuals present to the world, are unquestionably to be taken into account, in our estimation of diversities of genius—diversities that consist, both in the variety of the conceptions which arise and the variety of the relations which those conceptions suggest—and which, as one splendid compound, you are now, I flatter myself, able to reduce to the simple elements that compose it.

From the influence, then, which education has on the tendencies, both of simple and relative suggestion, we can, in this way, indirectly produce, in part, that sagacity, or ready discovery, of means of proof which I have shown to be absolutely beyond our direct volition. We can continually render ourselves acquainted with more objects, and can thus increase the store of possible suggestions, which may, on occasion, present to us new means of proof; and we can even, by the influence of certain habits, so modify the general tendency of suggestion, that certain relations, rather than others, shall rise to the mind, or shall rise, at least, more rapidly and readily. How many arguments occur to a well-cultivated understanding, in treating every subject which comes beneath its review, that never would have occurred to others;—and, though not one of the separate suggestions, which either strengthen or adorn the reasoning, has been the object of a particular volition,—the general cultivation, from which they all flow, has been willed, and would not have taken place but for that love of letters and science which continued to animate the studies which it produced,—making it delightful to know what it was happiness almost to wish to learn.



These remarks on the order of propositions which constitute reasoning, have shown you, I trust, that they depend on tendencies of the mind more lasting than our momentary volitions; that the relations which they involve could not be felt by us, unless we had previously the conceptions, which are the subjects of the relations; and that it is impossible for us to will any one of these conceptions, since, in that case, the conception must have existed before it was willed into existence. The conceptions, then, and the feelings of relation,—that is to say, the propositions in the order in which they present themselves to our internal thought,—arise, by the simple laws of suggestion only,—conception suggesting conception, and that which is suggested being felt to have a relation of some sort to the conception which suggested it.

The laws of simple suggestion,—according to which conceptions do not follow each other loosely, but those only which have a certain relation of some sort to each other,—furnish, as I have already said, the true explanation of the regularity of our reasonings. While there is a continued desire of discovering the relations of any particular object, it is not wonderful that, with this continued desire, the reasoning should itself be continuous; since the remaining conception of the object, the relations of which we wish to explore, and which must be as permanent as the permanent desire that involves it, will, of course, suggest the conception of objects related to it; and, therefore, the relations themselves, as subsequent feelings of the mind. If we wish to discover the proportion of A to D, these conceptions, as long as the very wish which involves them remains, must, by the simple laws of suggestion, excite other conceptions related to them; and, in the multitude of relative objects, thus capable of being suggested,

it is not wonderful that there should be some one, B or C, which has a common relation to both A and D; and which, therefore, becomes a measure for comparing them, or suggests this very relation, without any such intentional comparison. Indeed, since A and D, both conceived together, form one complex feeling of the mind, it might be expected that the relative objects most likely to arise by suggestion would be such as have a common relation to both parts, if I may so term them, of the complex feeling by which they are suggested,—the very proofs, or intermediate conceptions, which form the links of our demonstration.

You are aware that, in these remarks, I speak of the series of propositions that arise in our mind when we meditate on any subject, not of the series which we submit, in discourse or in written works, to the consideration of others. Though it is impossible for us, even in these cases, to will a single conception or a single feeling of relation,—since this would be to will into existence that which already exists,—it is, unquestionably, in our power not to clothe in words the conceptions or relations that have arisen in our thought; and, by this mere omission of the parts of our internal series, which we reject as feeble, or irrelative to our principal object, the whole series of propositions, as expressed, may seem very different, certainly far more forcible than that which really passed through our mind, and produced in us that conviction or persuasion which we wish to diffuse. But still it must be remembered, that it is the omission only which makes the difference, and that, in the whole series of propositions which we express in language, there is not a single conception or feeling of relation which we have directly willed.

Such is the process of ratiocination, considered as a natural process of the mind. But what are we to think of that art of reasoning, which, for so many ages, banished reason from the schools;—of that art which rendered it so laborious a drudgery to be a little more ignorant than before, which could produce so much disputation without any subject of dispute, and so many proud victories of nothing over less than nothing! I need not say that it is to the scholastic art of logic I allude.

That there may be, or rather that there is a rational logic, I am far from denying; and that many useful directions, in conformity with a certain system of rules, may be given to the inexperienced student that may facilitate to him acquisitions of knowledge, which, but for such directions, he would have made only more slowly, or perhaps not made at all. The art of reasoning, however, which a judicious logic affords, is not so much the art of acquiring knowledge as the art of communicating it to others, or recording it in the manner that may be most profitable for our own future advancement in the track which we have been pursuing. Its direct benefit to ourselves is rather negative than positive—teaching us the sources of error in our mental constitution, and in all the accidental circumstances of the language which we are obliged to use, and the society in which we must mingle,—and thus rather saving us from what is false, than bestowing on us what is true. Indeed, since we cannot, as I have shown, produce directly in our mind any one conception, or any one feeling of relation, it is very evident that the influence of any art of reasoning on our trains of thought must be indirect only.

But if an art of reasoning is to be given to us, it is



surely to be an art which is to render the acquisition of knowledge more easy, not more difficult; an art which is to avail itself of the natural tendency of the mind to the discovery of truth, not to counteract this tendency, and to force the mind, if it be possible, to suspend the very progress which was leading it to truth. With which of these characters did the syllogistic logic more exactly correspond?

The natural progress of reasoning I have already explained to you, and illustrated by examples both of the analytic and proportional kind. One conception follows another conception, according to certain laws of suggestion, to which our Divine Author has adapted our mental constitution; and, by another set of laws, which the same Divine Author has established, certain feelings of relation arise from the consideration of the suggesting and suggested object. This is all in which reasoning, as felt by us, truly consists. We have the conception of A, it suggests B, and, these two conceptions co-existing, we feel some relation which they bear to each other. B, thus suggested, suggests C; and the relation of these is felt in like manner; and thus, through the longest ratiocination, analytical or proportional, each subject of our thought suggests something which forms a part of it and is involved in it, or something which has to it a certain relation of proportion; and the relation of comprehension in the one case, or of proportion in the other case, is felt accordingly at every step. Nothing, surely, can be simpler than a process of this kind; and it is not easy to conceive how the process could be made shorter than nature herself has rendered it, unless every truth were known to us by intuition. Objects, and the relation of objects,—these are all which reasoning involves; and these must always be involved in every



the absurdity, which is implied in the very theory of it, distinguishes it still more. It constantly assumes, as the first stage of that reasoning by which we are to arrive at a particular truth, our previous knowledge of that particular truth. The major is the very conclusion itself under another form, and its truth is not more felt than that which it professes to develop. Thus, to take one of the trifling examples which, in books of logic, are usually given, with a most appropriate selection, to illustrate this worse than trifling art—when, in order to prove that John is a sinner, I do not adduce any particular sin of which he has been guilty, but draw up my accusation more irresistibly, by the major of a syllogism. All men are sinners. John is a man, therefore John is a sinner. If I really attached any meaning to my major proposition, all men are sinners, I must, at that very moment, have felt as completely that John was a sinner, as after I had pursued him, technically, through the minor and conclusion.

The great error of the theory of the syllogism—an error which, if my time allowed, it would be interesting to trace in its relation to the ideal systems of forms and species, which prevailed when the syllogistic art was invented, and during the long ages of its sway—consisted in supposing that, because all our knowledge may be technically reduced, in some measure, to general maxims, these maxims have naturally a prior and paramount existence in our thought, and give rise to those very reasonings which, on the contrary, give rise to them.

It is not on account of our previous assent to the axiom, A whole is greater than a part, that we believe any particular whole to be greater than any part of it; but we feel this truth in every particular case,





The syllogism, therefore, which proceeds from the axiom to the demonstration of particulars, reverses completely the order of reasoning, and begins with the conclusion, in order to teach us how we may arrive at it. It is, in the great journey of truth, as if, in any of our common journeyings from place to place—from Edinburgh to London, for example—we were to be directed first to go to London, and then to find out York or some other intermediate town, when we might be quite sure of knowing the way from York to London, because we must already have travelled it. Is this the sort of direction which we could venture to give to any traveller, or would not every traveller, if we were to venture to give him such a direction, smile at our folly? It would have been happy for science if the similar folly of the dialectic directions of the schools had been as easily perceived. But we all know what it is to journey from place to place; and few know, accurately, what it is to journey from truth to truth. In the one case, we are fond of the shortest road, and very soon find out what that shortest road is. In the other case, it is by no means certain that we are fond of the shortest road, or at least we have an unfortunate tendency to believe that a road is the shortest possible, merely because, being a great deal longer, it may have made us go through much very rapid exercise to very little purpose.

“God has not been so sparing to men,” says Mr Locke, “as to make them barely two-legged animals,<sup>1</sup> and left it to Aristotle to make them rational.”<sup>2</sup> Indeed, the most convincing proof of their own independent rationality is, that, with the encumbrance of the logical system of the schools, they were able to shake

<sup>1</sup> Creatures—Orig.

<sup>2</sup> Essay concerning Human Understanding, B. IV. c. xvii. sect. 4.

this off, and to become reasoners in the true and noble sense of that term, by abandoning the art which made them only disputants.

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### LECTURE L.

*Analysis of the Scholastic Logic, continued.—Order II., Relations of Succession.*

IN my last Lecture, Gentlemen, after analysing the process of ratiocination, and explaining the laws on which the order of its regular series of propositions depends, I proceeded to consider the logic of the schools as an instrument of reasoning, not on account of any merits which I supposed it to possess, as a useful instrument for this purpose, but merely from that interest which even error itself acquires, when it is regarded as the error of all the wise, or of all who were considered as wise for many ages. The ruins of a mighty intellectual system must surely be viewed by us with some portion at least of that emotion which is so readily excited by the decaying monuments, and the mere workmanship of mechanic art, in the ruins of an ancient city, or even of the solitary castle of some distinguished chieftain. It is impossible not to pause on the intellectual ruin, as we would pause on some half-worn sculpture or fallen column, when the same column or sculpture, if existing entire in any modern edifice, would scarcely attract our regard.

In considering this ancient system—ancient, unfortunately, only if we date it from the period at which it began its destructive reign, and not, if we date it from the period of its decay—I endeavoured to show



you, by a comparison of the process of the syllogistic art with the process by which, without any such artificial system, we advance from truth to truth, in those progressive feelings of relation which arise when we are said to reflect or meditate on a subject, how much simpler and shorter the natural process of two propositions at every stage is, than the artificial process of three at every stage; and what inconsistency is implied, in the very theory of the syllogism, if considered as an art of acquiring truth, and not merely as an art of communicating it; since the very knowledge implied in the major proposition, which, in the syllogism, is the first proposition of the series, supposes the previous feeling of that relation, which is expressed in the conclusion, for the discovery of which ultimate relation alone the syllogism is supposed to be invented. If we have previously felt this relation, which the conclusion expresses, we have evidently no need of the syllogism, which is technically to unfold it to us: if we have not previously felt it, we cannot admit the major proposition of the syllogism, which is the first step of the reasoning; and that which teaches us, by a series of propositions, only what we have admitted already, before the first proposition, cannot surely be supposed to add much to our stock of truths.

The natural process of reasoning, by two propositions, instead of the three, which the syllogism would force us to use, has been allowed, indeed, by logicians to have a place in their system; because, with all their fondness for their own technical modes and figures, they had not quite sufficient hardihood to deny, that it is at least possible for us to reason sometimes, as in truth we always reason. Their only resource, therefore, was to reduce this natural process

...and to give it a  
...of this reduc-  
...could be worthy of  
...accordingly,  
...wanting to be  
...of the teacher or hearer, and  
...as an enthymeme. It  
...a perfect syllogism.  
...more accu-  
...their own syllogism as,  
...of our  
...criticism.

The application of the syllogism as an instrument  
of reasoning for the acquisition of knowledge, is strik-  
ingly shown by the very examples which every writer  
on the subject employs to illustrate its power. If all  
the instances that have been used for this purpose,  
in the immortal works of the schoolmen, were  
collected together, though they might make a pretty  
large volume, they would not correspond to the  
great ignorance under a single truth; and can we think,  
then, that the superior facility which it gives for the  
discovery of truth is an excellence to which it may  
fairly lay claim? If the art could have been made  
profitable, in any way, for discovery, there can be no  
doubt that some zealous admirer of it, in the enthu-  
siasm of his admiration, would have illustrated its  
power by some applications of it that were more than  
verbal trifling. Yet, I may safely venture to say,  
that a mere perusal of the reasonings, brought for-  
ward as illustrative of the power of the syllogism,  
would be sufficient to convince the reader, if he had  
any doubt before, of the absolute inefficacy of the art,  
of which he was perusing the shadowy achievements.

It is very justly remarked by Dr Reid, in his

"Brief Account of Aristotle's Logic," published by Lord Kames in the last volume of his Sketches, "That the defects of this system were less apparent in the original works of its inventor than in the works of his commentators,—from this circumstance, that Aristotle, in discussing the legitimate syllogisms, never makes use of real syllogisms to illustrate his rules, but avails himself of the mere letters of the alphabet, as representative of the subjects and predicates of his propositions."<sup>1</sup> "The commentators, and systematical writers in logic," says Dr Reid, "have supplied this defect, and given us real examples, of every legitimate mode in all the figures. We acknowledge this to be charitably done, in order to assist the conception in matters so very abstract; but whether it was prudently done for the honour of the art, may be doubted. I am afraid this was to uncover the nakedness of the theory: it has undoubtedly contributed to bring it into contempt; for when one considers the silly and un instructive reasonings that have been brought forth by this grand organ of science, he can hardly forbear crying out, '*Parturiunt montes, et nascitur ridiculus mus.*' Many of the writers on logic," continues Dr Reid, "are acute and ingenious, and much practised in the syllogistical art; and there must be some reason why the examples they have given of syllogisms are so lean."<sup>2</sup>

The reason of this leanness, of which Dr Reid speaks, is not very difficult of discovery. It is to be found in the nature of the syllogism itself, which, as I have shown, assumes, and must assume, in every case as evident, and already felt, in the major proposition, the very truth which the technical reasoner is

<sup>1</sup> Chapter iv. sect. 3.—The language somewhat varied.

<sup>2</sup> Chapter iv. sect. 3.



between supposition and denotation by the aid of the two  
 following propositions. No choice, therefore, was left  
 to the student of the technical process, but of such  
 choice was provided no opportunity have been uniformly  
 reserved for the discussion, because any other example  
 would have shown the total impossibility of his  
 success. It is very evident, that the act could  
 not be regarded as of the slightest efficacy, unless  
 the conclusion, which was the important proposition,  
 were to be accepted with belief; and since the truth  
 of the conclusion, if false at all, must, as I have shown,  
 be false only before the major proposition itself  
 was false, we admitted this primary feeling of the  
 truth of the conclusion, before the opening of the  
 process, necessarily limited the argument itself to  
 the acceptance of propositions of which no proof  
 was required. Since the major is only another form  
 of expressing the conclusion, it is manifest, that, if  
 the conclusion was accepted to add any thing to our  
 knowledge, we have demonstrated something in the  
 process, which was previously unknown:  
 and, therefore, if the process was to be a genuine  
 process, and if which the remaining  
 propositions of the process were far from affording  
 any proof of the conclusion, we must, therefore,  
 be able to prove the conclusion necessary not to  
 the process, but to the conclusion, which was not either self-  
 evident or previously demonstrated: and the unfur-  
 nished process, we exposed his syllogism to be  
 a mere process, the object to show the weakness of his  
 argument. For it is a simple process, all men  
 are mortal, therefore, this is a simple fact, four  
 is a number, therefore, all quadrilaterals have  
 four sides, therefore, a quadrilateral, therefore a  
 square is a quadrilateral, therefore a  
 square is a quadrilateral.

These remarks, though relating chiefly to the influence of this technical process, as a supposed mode of facilitating the acquisition of knowledge in our own meditative reasonings, may have already shown you, that, if the syllogism was inefficacious, and, I may say, even worse than inefficacious, as a process for discovering truth, it was not less inadequate as an instrument for communicating truth to others; though it is for its supposed advantages in this respect that, of late at least, when we are beginning to recover from our transcendental admiration of it, it has been chiefly panegyricized or defended. A very little attention to the nature of the different propositions of the syllogism will be sufficient to show that the same fundamental error, which renders it useless for discovering truth, renders it equally useless for the development of it; and that, as our internal reasoning is only a series of enthymemes, it is only by such a series of enthymemes as that by which truth unfolds itself to our own minds, that it can be successfully unfolded to the minds of others.

In the attempt to communicate knowledge by the technical forms of reasoning, the major proposition, as first stated in the argument, must of course have been supposed to be understood and admitted when stated, since, if not admitted by the hearer or reader as soon as stated, it would itself stand in need of proof; and, if it was so understood and admitted, of what use could the remaining propositions of the syllogism be, since they could communicate no truth that was not communicated and felt before? There is no absurdity in supposing, that we may admit the conclusion of a syllogism, without admitting the major proposition; since the major, though it involves the conclusion, involves some more general relations. We

may admit, for example, that Peter is six feet high, though, if his stature were attempted to be demonstrated to us by the syllogism—all men are six feet high, but Peter is a man, therefore Peter is six feet high—we should certainly object to the major proposition, and form our belief only on particular observation of the individual. But though we may thus admit the proposition which forms the conclusion of a syllogism, without admitting the major proposition, from which it is said to flow, it is absolutely impossible that we should know the meaning of the major, and admit it, without admitting also, tacitly, indeed, but with equal feeling of its truth, the conclusion itself. The whole question, as we have seen, relates to the feeling of the truth of the major proposition; for, if it be true, and felt to be true, all the rest is already allowed; and yet this most important of all propositions, which, if the conclusion be of a kind that demands proof, must itself demand proof still more, is the very proposition which is most preposterously submitted to us in the first place for our assent, without any proof whatever,—the honour of a proof being reserved only for a proposition, which, if the major require no proof, must be itself too clear to stand in need of it. As a mode of communicating knowledge, therefore, the syllogism is, if possible, still more defective than as a mode of acquiring it. It does not give any additional knowledge, nor communicate the knowledge which it does communicate in any simpler, or shorter, or surer way. On the contrary, whatever knowledge it gives, it renders more confused by being more cumbrous; and it cannot fail to train the mind, which receives instruction in this way, to two of the most dangerous practical errors,—the errors of admitting, without proof, only what requires



proof, and of doubting, that is to say, of requiring proof, only of what is evident. Such is the syllogism, considered as an instrument, either for facilitating our own attainments in knowledge or for communicating these attainments to others.

The triumph of the syllogistic art, it must be confessed, however, is not as an art of acquiring or communicating truth, but as an art of disputation—as the great art of proving any thing by any thing, *quidlibet per quodlibet probandi*. And, if it be a merit to be able to dispute long and equally well, on subjects known and unknown, to vanquish an opponent by being in the wrong, and sometimes too by being in the right, but without the slightest regard either to the right or wrong, and merely as these accidental circumstances may have corresponded with certain skilful uses of terms without a meaning—this merit the logicians of the schools unquestionably might claim. Indeed, in controversies of this sort, in those ages of endless controversy, “success,” as it has been very truly remarked, “tended no more to decide the question, than a man’s killing his antagonist in a duel serves now to satisfy any person of sense that the victor had right on his side, and that the vanquished was in the wrong.”

Of this system of logic, the views given by philosophers, during the period in which it flourished, are almost innumerable; and, in no other works can we find so striking a mixture of intellectual strength and intellectual weakness; of acuteness, capable of making the nicest and most subtile distinctions, with an imbecility of judgment, incapable of estimating the insignificance of any one of those subjects on which so many nice and subtile distinctions were made. All these commentaries, and systematic views, however—though all

that is valuable in them were condensed into a few pages—would scarcely be equal in value to the few pages of a commentary of a different kind; in which the maxims of logic are adapted, with most singular happiness, to a ludicrous theory of syllogisms, the striking coincidences of which with the actual laws of the syllogism will be best felt by those to whom the rules of syllogizing are almost familiar.

“Though I’m afraid I have transgressed upon my reader’s patience already, I cannot help taking notice of one thing more extraordinary than any yet mentioned; which was Crambe’s *Treatise of Syllogisms*. He supposed that a philosopher’s brain was like a great forest, where ideas ranged like animals of several kinds; that those ideas copulated and engendered conclusions; that when those of different species copulate, they bring forth monsters or absurdities; that the major is the male, the minor the female, which copulate by the middle term, and engender the conclusion. Hence they are called the *præmissa*, or predecessors of the conclusion; and it is properly said by the logicians *quod pariant scientiam, opinionem*, they beget science, opinion, &c. Universal propositions are persons of quality; and therefore in logic they are said to be of the first figure. Singular propositions are private persons, and therefore placed in the third or last figure, or rank. From those principles all the rules of syllogisms naturally follow:

“I. That there are only three terms, neither more nor less; for to a child there can be only one father and one mother.

“II. From universal premises there follows an universal conclusion, as if one should say that persons of quality always beget persons of quality.

"III. From singular premises follows only a singular conclusion, that is, if the parents be only private people, the issue must be so likewise.

"IV. From particular propositions nothing can be concluded, because the *individua vaga* are (like whore-masters and common strumpets) barren.

"V. There cannot be more in the conclusion than was in the premises, that is, children can only inherit from their parents.

"VI. The conclusion follows the weaker part, that is, children inherit the diseases of their parents.

"VII. From two negatives nothing can be concluded, for from divorce or separation there can come no issue.

"VIII. The medium cannot enter the conclusion, that being logical incest.

"IX. An hypothetical proposition, is only a contract, or a promise of marriage; from such, therefore, there can spring no real issue.

"X. When the premises, or parents, are necessarily joined, (or in lawful wedlock,) they beget lawful issue; but contingently joined, they beget bastards.

"So much for the affirmative propositions; the negative must be deferred to another occasion.

"Crambe used to value himself upon this system, from whence he said one might see the propriety of the expression—such a one has a barren imagination; and how common is it for such people to adopt conclusions that are not the issue of their premises; therefore as an absurdity is a monster, a falsity is a bastard; and a true conclusion that followeth not from the premises, may properly be said to be adopted. But then what is an enthymeme? (quoth Cornelius.) Why, an enthymeme (replied Crambe) is when the major is



indeed married to the minor, but the marriage kept secret." <sup>1</sup>

Of the direct influence of the school logic, in retarding, and almost wholly preventing the progress of every better science, I need not attempt any additional illustration, after the remarks already offered. But the indirect influences of this art were not less hurtful.

One of the most hurtful consequences of this method, was the ready disguise of venerable ratiocination which it afforded for any absurdity. However futile an explanation might be, it was still possible to advance it in all the customary solemnities of mood and figure; and it was very natural, therefore, for those who heard what they had been accustomed to regard as reasoning, to believe that, in hearing a reasoning, they had heard a reason. Of this I may take an instance which Lord Kames has quoted from the great inventor of the system himself, and one which very few of his followers have been able to surpass. "Aristotle, who wrote a book about mechanics, was much puzzled about the equilibrium of a balance, when unequal weights are hung upon it, at different distances from the centre. Having observed that the arms of the balance describe portions of a circle, he accounted for the equilibrium by a notable argument. 'All the properties of the circle are wonderful. The equilibrium of the two weights that describe portions of a circle is wonderful; therefore the equilibrium must be one of the properties of the circle.' What are we to think of Aristotle's logic," continues Lord Kames, "when we find him capable of such childish reasoning? and yet that work has been the admiration of all the world, for centuries upon centuries; nay, that foolish argument has been

<sup>1</sup> Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus, B. I. c. 8.

espoused and commented upon, by his disciples, for the same length of time." <sup>1</sup>

As another very hurtful consequence of this technical system, I may remark, that the constant necessity of having recourse to some syllogistic form of argument, and of using these forms, in cases in which the opinions, involved in the syllogism, were at least as clear before the syllogism as after it, rendered argument and belief, by a sort of indissoluble association, almost synonymous terms. If we had still to prove John to be fallible, after having proved, or at least obtained assent to the proposition, that all men are fallible, it was not easy to discover any truth so self-evident as not to stand at least equally in need of demonstration. Hence the constant tendency in the scholastic ages to prove what did not stand in need of proof. Everything was *to be* demonstrated, and everything *was* demonstrated; though it must be confessed, that the only effect of the demonstration frequently was to render obscure—at least as obscure as any thing self-evident could be rendered—what, but for the demonstration, could not have admitted of the slightest doubt.

Akin to this tendency of proving everything, even self-evident propositions, by some syllogistic form, was the tendency which the mind acquired, to apply many varieties of technical phraseology to the same proposition, so as to make many propositions of one; as if every repetition of it, in another form of language, were the enunciation of another truth. It is impossible to take up a volume of any of the old logicians, and to read a single page of it, without discovering innumerable examples of the influence of which I

<sup>1</sup> Sketches of the History of Man, B. III. Sk. i. 2.

speak. Indeed, as the forms of technical expression, or at least the possible combinations of these, are almost infinite, it is, in many cases, difficult to discover what principle of forbearance and mercy to the reader led the logician to stop at one of his identical propositions, rather than to extend the supposed ratiocination through many similar pages. There can be no doubt, at least, that the principle which produced many pages, might, with as much reason, have produced a whole volume.

It is certainly not easy to imagine a proposition that would less stand in need of proof than that which affirms what is possible and what is impossible, not to be the same; or if, for the honour of logic, that nothing might be allowed to be credited without mood and figure, a syllogism should be thought necessary, a single syllogism seems all that could, with any decency, be claimed. But how many syllogisms does an expert logician employ to remove all doubt from this hardy proposition! The example which I take is not from those darker ages in which almost any absurdity may readily be supposed, but from the period which produced the *Essay on the Human Understanding*. It is from a work of a logician, David Dirodon, a professor in one of the French universities—an author, too, of no ordinary merit, who, in many cases, reasons with singular acuteness, and whose works were held in such high admiration, that he was requested, by a provincial synod of the church, to make as much haste as possible to publish his course of philosophy for the benefit of the churches *tanquam ecclesiis nostris pernecessarium*. The argument which I quote from him, may be considered, therefore, not as an instance of logical pleonasm peculiar to him, but as a very fair example of the technical argumentation of the period.



His demonstration, that things possible and things impossible are not the same, is contained in six weighty paragraphs, of which I translate literally the first two, that are sufficiently absurd indeed, but not more absurd than the paragraphs which follow them.

“Whatever, of itself and in itself, includes things contradictory, differs in itself from that which, of itself and in itself, does not imply any thing contradictory. But what is impossible of itself and in itself, involves things contradictory,—for example, an irrational human being, a round square. But what is possible of itself and in itself, includes no contradiction. Therefore, what is impossible in itself, differs from what is possible.

“Things contradictory are not the same; for example, a man, and not a man. But what is possible in itself and impossible in itself are contradictory, which I prove thus:—What is possible in itself and what is impossible in itself, are contradictory: But what is impossible in itself, is not possible in itself; therefore, what is possible in itself, and what is impossible in itself, are contradictory; therefore they are not the same in themselves.”

“Quod ex se et in se includit contradictoria, differt in se ab eo quod ex se, et in se non involvit contradictoria. Sed impossibile, ex se, et in se involvit contradictoria; puta homo irrationalis, quadratum rotundum, &c. Possibile vero ex se, et in se non includit contradictoria. Ergo, impossibile in se differt a possibili.

“Contradictoria non sunt idem; puta homo et non homo. Sed possibile in se et impossibile in se sunt contradictoria, quod sic probatur. Possibile in se, et non possibile in se, sunt contradictoria. Sed impossibile in se est non possibile. Ergo, possibile in se,

et impossibile in se, sunt contradictoria. Ergo in se non sunt idem."<sup>1</sup>

I have already said, that the two paragraphs which I have quoted, are but a small part of the ratiocination; for, as the reasoner supposes his adversary to be very obstinate, he thinks it necessary to assail him with a multitude of arguments, even after these which he has so strenuously urged.

What but the constant habit of mere verbal disputation could have reconciled even the dullest reasoner to such reasoning as this? If we had not previously believed what is impossible, and what is possible, not to be in themselves the same, could we have believed it more, after all this labour? The only circumstance which could make us have any doubt on the subject, is the long labour of such a demonstration, in which the truth is almost hid from our view by the multitude of words.

"So spins the silkworm small, its slender store,  
And labours till it clouds itself all o'er."<sup>2</sup>

The reign of this philosophy may now, indeed be considered merely as a thing which has been, for it is scarcely necessary to speak of one or two devoted admirers of the Aristotelian method who may, perhaps, not yet have vanished from among us,—thrown as they are, unfortunately, on too late an age, with opinions which, in other ages, might have raised them to the most envied distinctions—who love what is very ancient, and who love what is written in Greek, and who have, therefore, two irresistible reasons for ven-

<sup>1</sup> Dirodonis Philosophiæ Contractæ, Pars II. quæ est Metaphysica, Pars I. cap. i. sect. 10, 11.—The same subject is treated at much greater length, in his larger work on Metaphysics, from the 9th to the 28th page.

<sup>2</sup> Pope's Works; Dunciad, B. IV. v. 253-254.

erating that philosophy, which is unquestionably much older than Newton, or Des Cartes, or Bacon, and, as unquestionably, written in a language which saves it from vulgar eyes. Or rather, to speak with more candour of such misplaced sages of other times, there may, perhaps, be some few generous, but erring lovers of wisdom, who, impressed with the real merits of Aristotle, and with the majesty of that academic sway, which he exercised for so long a period of the history of our race, give him credit for merit still greater and more extensive than he really possessed,—but merit it must, at the same time, be acknowledged, which was long as indisputable as his real excellence, and which all the learned and honoured of every nation, in which learning could confer honour, united in ascribing to him and gloried in being his worshippers. The worship, however, is now past, but there are effects of the worship which still remain. We have laid aside the superstition; but, as often happens, in laying aside the superstition, we have retained many of the superstitious practices.

That we reason worse than we should have done, if our ancestors had reasoned better, there can be no doubt, because we should have profited by the results of their better reasoning; but I have almost as little doubt that we suffer from their errors, in another way, by having imbibed, as it was scarcely possible for us not to imbibe, some portion of the spirit of their Dialectic subtilties; some greater passion, for distinctions merely verbal, and for laborious demonstrations of things self-evident, than we should have felt, from the mere imperfection of our intellectual nature, if the logic of Aristotle had never been.

In the division which I made of the relations sug-



[illegible]

been a sufficient proof of that insanity which his fellow-citizens, on another celebrated occasion, ascribed to him. What Democritus is thus said to have done, is the very folly in which all mankind concurred for a long succession of centuries. They put out their eyes that they might see nature better; and they saw, as might be supposed, only the dreams of their own imagination.

The order of relations which we have next to consider, are those which, as involving the notion of time, or priority and subsequence, I have denominated Relations of Succession. On these, however, it will not be necessary to dwell at any length. They require, indeed, very little more than to be simply mentioned; the only questions of difficulty which they involve having been discussed fully in my Preliminary Lectures, in which it was necessary, before proceeding to examine the changes or affections of the mind in its varying phenomena, and the mental powers or susceptibilities which these changes or affections denote, that we should understand what is meant by the terms change and power, cause and effect. Any part of those discussions it would be quite superfluous now to repeat; since, after the full illustration of the Doctrine of Power or Efficiency, which I then submitted to you, and the frequent subsequent allusions to it, I may safely take for granted that the doctrine itself cannot have escaped from your memory.

The relations of succession, then, as the very name implies, are those which the subjects of these relations bear to each other, as prior or posterior in time. What we term a cause suggests its particular effect; what we term an effect suggests its particular cause, when we have previously become acquainted with

their order of succession. If the cause, however, suggested nothing more than the simple conception of the effect, and the effect nothing more than the simple conception of the object which was its cause, the suggestions would, of course, be referable to the power or susceptibility formerly considered by us,—that of simple suggestion, or association, as it is commonly termed. But the cause does not suggest the effect, merely as a separate object of our thought, nor the effect the cause, as a separate object. It suggests also the new feeling of their mutual relation. When I look at a picture of Titian, for example, and the conception of the painter instantly arises, I do not think of Titian merely as an individual, unconnected with the object which I perceive, I do not think of him in the same manner as I may have thought of him repeatedly at other times when the reading of his name, or the mention of him in conversation on works of art, or any other accidental circumstance, may have recalled him to my mind. If I had only the conception of Titian as I may have conceived him in those other cases, the suggestion would be truly a simple suggestion; but this simple conception of the artist is instantly followed by another feeling of his connexion with that particular work of his art, which is before my eyes; a relation which it requires no great analytic discernment to separate from the simple conception itself, and which arises precisely in the same way as the other relations which have been considered by us,—the relation of resemblance, for example, when, in music, one air suggests to us a similar melody,—or the relation of proportion, when we think of the squares of the sides of a right-angled triangle, in Pythagoras's celebrated theorem.

The relations of succession, then, are as distinct



from the simple perceptions or conceptions which suggest them, and as truly indicative, therefore, of a peculiar power or susceptibility of the mind, as the relations of co-existence are distinct from the perceptions or conceptions which suggest them. They are relations either of casual or of invariable antecedence or consequence; and we distinguish these as clearly in our thought as we distinguish any other two relations. We speak of events which happened after other events as mere dates in chronology. We speak of other events as the effects of events or circumstances that preceded them. The relation of invariable antecedence and consequence, in distinction from merely casual antecedence and consequence, is, as I have already frequently stated, this relation of causes and effects. When I regard any object, and feel this relation of uniform proximity of succession, which it bears to some prior object, I term it an effect of that prior object. When I look forward, instead of backward, and regard the present object in relation to some other object which is not yet existing, I feel a relation, which, in reference to the effect that is to be produced, may be termed fitness or aptitude; and it is on our knowledge of these fitnesses or aptitudes that all practical science is founded. By our acquaintance with this relation, we acquire a command, not merely of existing things, but almost of things that, as yet, have scarcely any more real existence than the creations of poetic fancy. We lead the future, almost at our will, as if it were already present. While mechanic hands are chipping the rough block, or adding slowly stone to stone, with little more foresight than of the place where the next stone is to be added, there is an eye which has already seen that imperial edifice in all its finished splendour, which

other eyes are incapable of seeing, till year after year shall have unfolded, through a series of progressive changes, that finished form which is their ultimate result. What is true in architectural design is not less true in all the other arts which science has evolved. There are hands continually toiling to produce what exists already to the mind of that philosopher whom they almost blindly obey—who, by his knowledge of the various aptitudes of things, knows not merely what is, but what must be—beholding through a long series of effects, that ultimate effect of convenience or beauty which is at once to add some new enjoyments to life, and to confer additional glory on the intellectual empire of that being whom God has formed to image, however faintly, the power by which he raised him into existence. We cannot look around us without discovering, in every work of human art which meets our eye, the benefits which we have received from our knowledge of this one relation. Whatever industry has conferred upon us—the security, the happiness, the splendour, and, in a great measure, the very virtues of social life—are referable to it; since industry is nothing more than the practical application of those productive fitnesses which which must have been felt and known before industry could begin.

“ These are thy blessings, Industry, rough power,  
Whom labour still attends, and sweat and pain ;  
Yet the kind source of every gentle art,  
And all the soft civility of life :  
Raiser of human kind! by Nature cast  
Naked and helpless, out amid the woods  
And wilds, to rude inclement elements!  
And still the sad barbarian, roving, mix’d  
With beasts of prey, or for his acorn meal  
Fought the fierce tusky boar ;—a shivering wretch

Aghast and comfortless, when the bleak North,  
 With winter charged, let the mix'd tempest fly,  
 Hail, rain, and snow, and bitter-breathing frost :—  
 Then to the shelter of the hut he fled,  
 And the wild season, sordid, pined away.  
 For home he had not.—Home is the resort  
 Of love, of joy, of peace and plenty, where,  
 Supporting and supported, polish'd friends  
 And dear relations mingle into bliss.  
 But this the rugged savage never felt,  
 Ev'n desolate in crowds ;—and thus his days  
 Roll'd heavy, dark, and unenjoy'd along,  
 A waste of time !—till Industry approach'd,  
 And roused him from his miserable sloth ;  
 His faculties unfolded ; pointed out  
 Where lavish Nature the directing hand  
 Of Art demanded : show'd him how to raise  
 His feeble force by the mechanic powers,  
 To dig the mineral from the vaulted earth ;  
 On what to turn the piercing rage of fire,  
 On what the torrent and the gather'd blast ;  
 Gave the tall ancient forest to his axe ;  
 Taught him to chip the wood and hew the stone,  
 Till, by degrees, the finish'd fabric rose ;  
 Tore from his limbs the blood-polluted fur,  
 And wrapt him in the woolly vestment warm :—  
 Nor stopp'd at barren bare necessity,  
 But, still advancing bolder, led him on  
 To pomp, to pleasure, elegance and grace ;  
 And, breathing high ambition through his soul,  
 Set science, wisdom, glory in his view,  
 And bade him be the lord of all below." <sup>1</sup>

Such is the value of that susceptibility of our mind,  
 by which we feel the relations of objects to each other  
 as successive, when considered in reference to what is  
 commonly termed science. It has made us what we  
 are ; and when we think of what we now are, and of  
 what the race of mankind once was—to speculate on  
 the future condition of man in those distant ages,

<sup>1</sup> Thomson's Seasons—Autumn, 43-49, 57-85, and 90-95.



which still await him on this scene of earth—when new relations shall have been evolved in objects the most familiar to us, and new arts consequently developed, which, with our present knowledge, no genius can anticipate, is almost as if we were speculating on the possible functions and enjoyments of some higher being.

How near he presses on the angel's wing !  
Which is the angel ! which the child of clay ?

*Young.*



END OF VOLUME SECOND.

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